



To Wish Impossible Things by **AHardLifee**, **writeyourownlifestory**

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Summary:

Nobody ever told Richie how lonely life could be on your own. Yeah, that should have been a given. Alone. Lonely. Literally the same shit. But he had found a way to convince himself that he was better off that way. He had a good group of friends, but he was a loner nonetheless. A lone wolf, so to say.

Or the alternate: Richie thinks back on how he ruined his chance at a happy life with Eddie and is surprised when the two of them are brought back in time to that very moment. Except, they're still adults and their younger selves just aren't bright enough to see the resemblance.

1. It Must've Been Love - Roxette

Author's Note:

Co-written and created by two lovelies ladies who just love these boys and think they're complete and total idiots!



Nobody ever told Richie how lonely life could be on your own. Yeah, that should have been given. Alone. Lonely. Literally the same shit. But he had found a way to convince himself that he was better off that way. He had a good group of friends, but he was a loner nonetheless. A lone wolf, so to say.

Half of his comedy specials were dedicated to it. His endless preaching about doing whatever he pleased and not worrying about having a significant other. He was singing to the choir of a chosen few, but it was all bullshit. All lies.

He was pathetically lonely, but he wasn't about to make a special on that. It was sad enough as it was, but to suddenly backtrack on everything he stood for so he could preach about how he was lonely and he just wanted someone to hold him at night wasn't exactly the

most ideal career move.

So instead he swallowed it all down - no pun intended but good one though - and allowed other people to write his jokes for him. It worked out better that way. All he had to do was remember his lines and deliver them with some pep and he'd make bank.

And he did. He made good money selling lies to people who wanted to hear them and he was happy with that.

Well, not happy. Content. His career wasn't where he hoped it would be, but he was well known enough and he made a decent living. His social life consisted of him going to parties, snorting drugs so he could forget about the bubbling feeling in his stomach and his mind, and putting on this mask that the media had made out for him.

Richie was content with the life he was living and he planned on continuing to be content until something came along that would change that.

He didn't imagine anything doing that until, to his utter and complete shock, he was given a wedding invitation.

Weddings were meant to be something to celebrate, right? Sure, he had this deep-rooted issue with them, always believing them to be some faux ritual where two people signed a paper that didn't mean shit but contractual benefits; but that was a whole different issue.

Richie didn't believe it at first, thinking the whole thing to be something of a joke, only it wasn't. It was legitimate, with fucking golden raised letters, which nearly made him throw up his lunch at the aspect of actually being involved with such an event.

Eddie Kaspbrak was to wed Myra Blahblahblah in the sunny town of Derry Maine some fine summer afternoon.

The invitation was disgustingly old fashioned and the picture of the couple attached to it was so staged it looked like something out of the fucking renaissance. Seriously, how could two people who looked like absolute strangers think about getting married?

In the group chat (without Eddie, of course), Mike mentioned that it had been Myra's idea to get married in the first place which didn't surprise Richie in the slightest. That woman was everything Eddie could have ever imagined for a wife because she was the reincarnation of his fucking mother.

She was bitter, and mean, and treated Eddie like he was a fucking toddler who couldn't cut the crust off his sandwich. Richie kept his mouth shut when they started dating because seriously, Eddie was a grown-ass man, he could figure it out on his own. Except he didn't. He stayed with her and now he was going to marry her, and Richie was gonna have to watch him do it.

He went back to Maine because he was invited. Eddie said they weren't having a traditional wedding party because Myra didn't want to choose between her friends (or didn't have her fucking friends) so there wouldn't be any groomsman or best man though Eddie made it very clear if he did have one, it would have been Stan.

Of course, that was impossible and just made the whole situation suck even more. The group lost Stan a few years back. Richie didn't like to think about it, as it just brought on more pain for them. Stan had always been so quiet, no one realized that the silence had been a cry for help. Looking back, maybe he could have done something or said nothing. He didn't know and he was too sad to care anymore.

The rest of the Losers Club arrived in their hometown so they could celebrate the lovely union. Even if the wedding itself wasn't going to be overly traditional, they still threw him a bachelor party though it was boring as all fuck because Derry didn't have any strip clubs, even if Richie was fairly certain he wouldn't have enjoyed himself if they did.

See, Richie is gay. Like, full-blown into men one hundred percent all the way gay. He had been with a guy or two in the darkness of night when Richie could hide away from the rest of the world. And that's fine. Now, at least. Back when they were kids, however, it was fucking horrific. Nobody wanted to be gay in the nineties, but gay in Maine in the nineties? Oh no no *no*.

He swallowed that part down until he could get out of Maine but by the time he did, Richie found himself falling into step the same way he did back when he was a kid. Forcing himself to stay in the closet and playoff this whole 'I am too good for relationships so I don't bother dating' situation. That's why all his specials have him talking about 'ex-girlfriends' just to give off the idea that yeah, he is single now, but he's been with girls before.

Eddie seems to like both or maybe he is just pretending to like women or maybe just pretending to like Myra. Richie doesn't know

because they never talked about it. Eddie tried to once when they were kids, opening his heart to Richie and confessing his true feelings, but Richie shut that down so quickly there was an unfortunate shift in their relationship after that.

They went from best friends tied at the hip as two lost souls forced together until they could break apart. It killed Richie to push him away, but he was young, and scared, and didn't want to risk what he already had.

It was a regret that he had lived with his entire life, and sitting in the Chinese restaurant with all their friends as they celebrated a union that shouldn't be happening in the first place just carried on that weight.

He knew he should get over it because it's been fucking years since it happened, but you never forget your first love. Never forget the way they looked when you shattered their hearts to pieces.

He tried to play it off and get drunk, but it didn't work out very well. He found himself just watching Eddie as they all chatted and laughed and reminisced on all their fun time. It was seven-time. Bill, Beverly, Ben, Mike, himself, and of course the man of the hour, Eddie.

Myra hated them all, but she hated Richie the most. Richie wondered if she knew. If she knew that Richie was the first person to capture Eddie's heart all those years ago. Knew that while she was the one he was settling for, it was Richie he had once loved, had once wanted.

Richie didn't care too much for her either but he was too good of a

friend to say anything. After all, he was a pussy back when they were kids, and he was a pussy even now, too afraid to speak his truth and tell Eddie he could do better.

So instead he just sat back and stuffed his face, suffering in silence for most of the party. He snuck outside at some point for a cigarette, something Beverly joined not long after. He had always been close to all his friends, but there was something special about Beverly.

Maybe it was that stereotypical 'girl and her gay best friend' relationship they shared or something else. He didn't know, but he found he could always be honest with her. She was the only one who had guessed his feelings for Eddie, as he had never told a soul about it. Never even orally admitted to it.

She had her conflicting feelings, having bounced back and forth with Bill and Ben until both guys got tired of her confusion and they all went their separate ways. Beverly was currently involved with a guy who wasn't very nice and it broke Richie's heart to see her suffering just like himself.

She had seen the way he was looking; the pathetic longing that existed in his eyes and could only offer a warm hug. It was enough for Richie. The weekend would be hard for them all, but it would be hell for him, but he'd rather put up with that than ruin Eddie's chance at being happy.

Eddie deserved more, but if Myra was who he wanted then who was he to ruin that for him?

They were staying at the townhouse because half of their families were gone now. Richie didn't know how it happened, but somehow he ended up being the one driving back with Eddie. They arrived separately and he was pretty sure Mike was the one who drove Eddie there, but now they were all alone, standing outside the Chinese restaurant and it wasn't like Richie was going to let Eddie get a fucking taxi home when they were going back to the same place.

So they got in Richie's sports car that was sleek and would have made his teenage self cream his jeans. A fire-red Camaro issues 1985. Iconic and ideal. Richie spent his entire paycheck from his first Comedy Central paycheck on it and had been showing it off ever since.

Eddie has a Hummer because he was protective and his wife to be thought having anything smaller would result in him being in an accident. Richie rolled his eyes when he read the never-ending ranting that Eddie sent the group chat. What was the point of living if you were going to fucking play it safe?

It was weird. It was so weird, to be half-drunk driving - which was surprising Eddie let him drive him drunk - back to an old hotel with your crush for the past two decades, who, lo and behold, was getting married that weekend. Richie turned on the radio as he tried to fill in the silence which was almost piercing.

"So . . . you're getting married, huh? Didn't see that coming," he commented, trying to make small talk. Usually, Richie would find it easy to fill in the silence, but you try and do it while the man you like is marrying the reincarnation of Jabba the Hutt. You do as Richie and wallow in your misery.

“You didn’t? Why not? Is it so surprising that I’m happy and I want to tie the knot, dickwad?” The annoyance in Eddie’s voice was evident and it hit harder than one of Bowers’s punches. And whatever reaction one would expect of someone after hearing that, Richie did the contrary: he laughed. Not out loud, more like a snort.

“Are you though?” He asked, a little smirk showing on his lips.

“Am I what?” Eddie replied sharply, which made Richie feel as if he was playing with fire.

“Are you happy?” Richie insisted that smirk fading a little to show he was being serious.

“Of course I’m happy,” Eddie said a bit too quickly. “Getting married in a few days. How could I not be happy?”

Richie shrugged, not saying a word. He kept his eyes on the road and his hands on the wheel.

Eddie sighed loudly, turning his head to glare at the other man. “What, Rich?”

“I didn’t say anything.”

“Yeah and that’s your thing. You never shut the fuck up any other time unless something is genuinely bothering you. Then you’re

completely silent and it's incredibly off-putting, so can you just say whatever you want to say."

Richie shouldn't have been surprised by Eddie knowing something like that. Even despite the shift in their friendship after they chat all those years ago, they were still best friends and had been their whole lives. Eddie picking up on something like that should not have been something that made Richie's heart beat faster and faster. He hated and loved at the same time that Eddie knew him that well.

"Do you remember when we were kids?" Richie asked quietly. "All the stupid shit we used to do? Hanging in the clubhouse and sharing the hammock?"

"Because you couldn't get out of it even though you agreed to the time limit."

"I did it to annoy you. Annoying you was like a kink to me back then."

"Gee, what a surprise," Eddie replied, rolling his eyes.

"I only speak the truth, Edward," Richie commented. "I loved annoying you cause it also meant you were giving me your full attention. And I fucking loved it. Well, I still do," he admitted, finally letting out a breath he didn't even know he was holding. "I'm not happy. There, you have it. Honest Richard Tozier. Now be honest yourself, are you happy with Myra? Or are you with her just cause it reminds you of your mother and that means 'safety'?" He insisted, making air quotes with his fingers.

“First of all, hands on the wheel, Tozier!” Eddie yelled, almost reaching for the wheel himself. “And stop it with the ‘You’re not happy’ bullshit. I’m getting married in two days! Yes, I am happy!”

“Don’t seem happy,” Richie commented, mostly to himself.

“And how do I seem, Richard?” Eddie asked with a roll of his eyes.

Richie wanted to say that he seemed like someone who was getting ready to sign his life away, but that seemed too on the nose. He opened his mouth to speak but shut it when Eddie began speaking again.

“Also, if you liked my attention that much, you shouldn’t have pushed me away when I tried to give you all of it.” Eddie pointed out.

And that's where it was. Richie always knew this would happen, always feared it. They had never spoken about that time in the clubhouse. They had been mere teens and they were hiding out alone. Wrestling around in the hammock for some fun until things got to be too physical, too real, way too quickly.

Eddie had kissed him and admitted that he had feelings for Richie and even though the latter felt the same he pushed him away because that was what he had been told to do. Hide that dirty part of you and keep it a secret for as long as you could.

Since that day, they never shared the hammock again.

“Okay number one, it was the early nineties and I was stressed out. Number two, I didn’t expect to be feeling this way years later!”

Eddie pinched the bridge of his nose, sighing deeply. He did this often around Richie. Sighed and shook his head, utterly bothered by his existence. Richie used to love it though now he was starting to realize how much of a bother he was to the other man.

“Look,” Eddie said, using that tone that Richie hated. The tone that his parents and teachers would use when they were disappointed. “Back then . . . Yeah, I had a crush on you.”

“It was more than a crush. Yeah, we were kids but that was love, Eds.”

“Don’t call me that,” Eddie requested quietly. “We were fifteen. Kids! What did we know about love?”

What did they know indeed? Richie was thirty years old and he met many different people in his life but never felt happy the way he did when he was with Eddie. He never felt comfortable or okay with himself the way he was when he and Eddie used to ride their bikes or run along the streets.

"I loved you," Richie admitted, idling at the stop sign. "I did. Doesn't exactly help now but I did."

"Rich," Eddie said, using that all too gentle tone once again. "Look. I'm not . . . I'm not angry, about how it went down. Yes, I was hurt but I'm over it. I'm happy now! I found someone who makes me happy. Yeah, Myra is safe but there is nothing wrong with that. I mean, you didn't want to be with me because you were scared. Being apart was safer."

Richie slowed down as he turned towards the bridge. Oh, that fucking bridge. It was like it was mocking him somehow. "That's the thing. I played it safe and I've spent the last fifteen years regretting it. I've spent nights after nights wishing to go back and fix it. Going back to that dreadful day when I was a coward and refused to admit I felt the same. Fuck..." he rubbed his eyes behind his glasses. "I still wish I could go back and tell you all that. I'm so fucking sorry, Eddie."

And it was true. He wished he could go back in time and slap himself.

"We don't know what it would have been like," Eddie said carefully. "We could have had the shit beaten out of us. Or we could have been shit at being a couple. I mean, we're best friends and we treat each other like shit."

"We don't treat one another like shit, Edward. We have a system. We go back and forth but we love one another all still the same." Richie loved him all the same at least.

“Maybe playing it safe isn’t exactly ideal but it’s worked out pretty well. I’m sorry that you’re unhappy but maybe now that you got this off your chest you’ll be able to move on from it,” Eddie suggested. “Richie, look at me.”

Richie turned his heads, adjusted his glasses ever so slightly with his hand.

“We can't go back to that day. I wish we could. Maybe I would have smacked some sense to you and tell you to stop being such a scaredy-cat.”

“Sounds hot.”

“We can't, Rich. And I can't just throw away the life I have now because you finally came to your senses fifteen years too late.”

Too late. Those were the words of their reality. He was just too late.

“I know, Eds. I know.”

The rest of the ride was silent. And that silence was so painful, it pressed Richie’s chest to the point where it hurt even breathing. With a heavy heart, they crossed over the Kissing Bridge, a place that had meant so much to Richie in the past. The lights flickered around them, but the town was old, so it didn’t surprise Richie in the least. He finally parked in front of the Townhouse almost an hour after they left the restaurant.

He stepped out of the car and made his way inside, stealing a few glances at Eddie as they climbed up the stairs. He should have stayed home and just play dead. Rejected the invitation and live with his misery until he died. But nope. He was a masochist. He had to go and see the guy he loved to get married to a demonic woman. He was going to start writing his material so he could add this shit to his shows.

“Goodnight, Eds,” he said, almost too low for anyone to catch it. But Eddie did listen and offered him a little smile before murmuring his goodnight and stepping into his room. Richie was never so grateful for stupid traditions as he was right now with separate rooms for the soon-to-be-married couple: just the thought of them sharing a bed made him want to rip his hair off.

Once inside their rooms, they didn’t even bother turning on the lights or changing their clothes, they just kicked their shoes off and collapsed in their beds; their drunkenness long went.

Richie wasn’t someone to set alarms, it was usually his manager who called him nonstop until he had to get up. But Eddie? Eddie woke up religiously at six every morning, just like Myra desired - something to do with digestion of their breakfast or something like that. That was why he asked the receptionist to call him at that hour to make sure he got ready on time for the chaos that was gonna be preparing for the rehearsal dinner.

But that call never came, so he slept peacefully until almost eleven when he woke up almost too rested. Something wasn’t good. He frowned and checked his phone. “Shit. Shit shit shit,” he cursed under his breath as he got up. It was also very strange that Myra

hadn't called him or even sent the police in case something had happened to him. Oh well, she must have wanted Eddie to rest. After all, she did care about him. Right?

He took his time taking a shower, getting rid of any trace of alcohol smell and changed into new clothes before stepping out of his room.

Richie, contrary to Eddie, had woken up merely twenty minutes ago, which he used to brush his teeth and change his clothes; even though they looked as dirty as the ones he wore the night before.

"Hey, Eds. You woke up late," Richie commented upon seeing the other. He hated small talk and he couldn't stress it enough. More if it was with Eddie.

"Yeah, guess Myra wanted me to rest or something. Unfortunate I missed breakfast though," the other said with a little shrug.

"I bet this old place doesn't even offer a good breakfast. Come on, let's try to find the others and go to that diner near here. For the good ole' days," the comedian offered with a hopeful smile. He hated the idea of Eddie getting married, but he hated the idea of not having Eddie in his life at all even more. So he was going to suck it up and be a supportive friend.

Richie led Eddie through the Townhouse finding it oddly empty. He knocked on Beverly's door but got no answer. He tried Ben's wondering if the two finally got together but there was nothing there either. Mike still lived in town so it wasn't like he'd be hanging around.

He tried the final door where Bill's was supposed to be staying but instead saw someone who looked oddly familiar to the old priest that used to preach at the church his parents took him to. But that was a long time ago. No way that dude was still around.

"Maybe they went out for the preparations?" Richie asked him curiously. He led Eddie down the stairs, but the kitchen was closed. That wasn't anything surprising.

So they decided to skip it all and head to the old diner. It was old and the food was greasy but that was perfectly fine. They used to bring all their change up and see what they could get to split through the seven of them.

"Is that the same waitress? God, she hasn't aged a day," Richie mentioned with a nod as he slid into the booth.

The whole place looked the same. From the wallpaper to the smell, it was like they were kids again, filled with terrible food and lousy service. Richie ordered his usual cheeseburger and milkshake not caring that it was still in the early afternoon.

Eddie ordered cereal because he was a normal human being and wanted something he could enjoy and also because he got sick of eggs and bacon was too fatty for him. Pancakes were too sweet and waffles were too heavy for his stomach.

"Can't wait for you to see what you serve at the reception." He

mumbled softly.

“The menu still be fine. Don’t like it, don’t eat it, asshole.” Eddie grumbled, crossing his arms as he leaned back in the booth.

The radio across from them played old oldies song until the DJ stated they were playing the brand new Roxette hit.

Richie listened for a moment, sitting up slightly. “New? This came out when we were kids. I used to jam out to this when I was alone in my room.”

“You would.”

Little did Eddie know Richie used to sit alone in his bed with his Walkman, listening to the song on repeat. He would call himself a moron and a failure as the sweet Swedish band sang out to him.

“Always a pleasure to meet your expectations, Eddie Spaghetti,” Richie teased him before grabbing his burger when it arrived and taking a big bite, humming contently. “Just like I remember. It’s as if we were back in the nineties,” he commented with his mouth half full.

“First of all, don’t call me that!” He exclaimed out of habit. The thing was, he did like it. “And second of all, could you please swallow before speaking? I can see the cow in there,” Eddie said in disgust before taking a sip of his orange juice. “Besides, it’s impossible to be

in the nineties, Rich. Scientifically impossible.”

“Well, Doc Brown will beg to differ and also you know how I eat my food, Eds. I haven’t changed a bi-“ his words were cut off as he stared out the window, watching a bunch of kids speed down the street in their bikes. Eddie, who was looking everywhere but Richie’s half-chewed burger, also saw them ride by.

“W-were- what? What is-? What?” The comedian mumbled incoherently. Wow, Derry was leaving him speechless a lot.

“No. That- that can be. Those weren’t- we aren’t- no.”

They pressed themselves up against the window, watching as the group of young teens hurried by on their bikes. They were close enough to be able to hear the endless yelling. The waitress rolled her eyes, commenting about kids and summer, though they paid her no mind.

No. It was impossible. They were just a bunch of kids who looked strangely similar to them. Like the seven of them. What a weird coincidence. Right? But that was when they heard it.

“Beep beep, Richie!” One of them, the one who looked mostly like Eddie, shouted.

“You’re a party pooper, Eds! Don’t you know how to have fun?!” The one with the glasses shouted back as all of them laughed.

The pair still sitting on the booth of the diner just stared as the group of kids passed by and after a moment, Richie muttered. “Well, *shit.*”

2. If I Could Turn Back Time - Cher

Notes for the Chapter:

Shout out to all those taking the time to read this. It means a lot to us! Please tell us down in the comments how you're feeling. Written words are what fuel us the most!

The two sat back, staring at the street, utterly baffled by what they had just witnessed. Seeing kids on bikes wasn't anything new, even if most kids nowadays had those hoverboards and shit. Eddie had seen many different types of physical transit in the city so seeing a couple of young teens on bikes didn't surprise him.

It was seeing young teens that were all too familiar to him was what struck him. He knew those voices, knew those bikes. They knew every kid that rode by as he had been there when they did it. When the waitress brought the check, he looked at their total.

"Rich," He lifted it, showing it off. The prices were a hell of a plot lower than had been previously. Sure, maybe Derry didn't deal with inflation the same way the city did but come on!

"Do you accept Apple Pay?" Richie asked the waitress as she came by again.

She scoffed, the same way she would when Richie would have said something stupid back when they were kids. Tell a joke or half attempt to flirt in an attempt to appear straight. "You can't pay with fruit, dingus." She snapped, her hand falling to her hip as she popped her gum. Eddie tried not to think about how unsanitary that was. "Cash or American Express only. If you try to dip, we'll call the

cops.”

The group rode by again and Eddie could see Richie itching to get a closer look. Eddie went into his wallet and took out a twenty; that was enough for both their meals plus the tip. They hurried out, standing by Richie’s car as the group of young teens zipped around and around on their bikes.

There was no denying who they were. Eddie would recognize them anywhere as he had spent the first ten years of his life with them. The Losers Club. They were all there, riding without a car. Bill led them on, like always with Beverly attached to him because she didn’t have her bike. Then Ben and Mike close behind. Stan was in the middle and he looked back to the other two who were always a stride or so behind the others.

Edward Kasprak and Richard Tozier. Eddie and Richie. Richie and Eddie. It was them.

But from a pretty long time ago. Eddie couldn’t tell just how long ago, but they were definitely in their teenage years. Young enough to not have cars yet but old enough where they had upgraded from those rickety bikes they used to ride on when they were only around ten or eleven.

Eddie had begged his mother for two Christmas’ in a row for a new bike. He was getting taller and thinner and didn’t want to worry about the bus or walking to school. He got one for his fourteen birthday and had it until he left the place. He stopped riding it after they turned sixteen and began getting cars. Mike was the first with his truck, followed by Bill who got a car from his old man. Eddie never got a car, but neither did Beverly. They relied on others for

transit, which was fine because they only ever hung out with the others.

It was that bike, the Christmas bike, that this version of himself was riding now. He still had his fanny pack and his hair was cut accordingly. Richie, at least this younger version of him, was biking circles around the younger Eddie, keeping all four eyes on him.

“I think I am gonna throw up.” Richie, the actual Richie; thirty-year-old Richie, who was standing beside him, muttered quietly.

“This can’t be happening. We’re . . . we’re dreaming. You drugged our meals last night and now we’re dreaming.”

“I didn’t do shit! I didn’t even drink last night!” Richie argued. A lie because he drank some sake but they weren’t discussing that!

“Well, something must be up because we just saw our past selves! And fucking . . .” Eddie paused, turning when he heard the lock striking for noon. “I thought that the clock broke!” Eddie gestured to the clock tower across the way. It had broken during their senior year of high school and they ended up tearing it down.

“It did,” Richie said carefully. “That . . . dude, this is so fucking trippy.” He pinched the bridge of his nose, trying to get the hang of what was going on. He looked up, watching as the Losers rode off. “Shit! They’re leaving. Let’s go.”

“What the fuck? Are we supposed to follow them?”

“Just get in the fucking Camaro!” Richie snapped.

With no other choice, Eddie followed suit, getting inside the super tiny sports car so they could trek after their teenage selves. They stayed close behind, driving down the streets of their old neighborhood that didn't even look that old anymore. They trailed them until the Losers abandoned their bikes along the sidewalk so they could hurry down by the quarry. Chances were they were going to collect rocks or disturb the wildlife. Something wildly stupid and immature.

They parked the car across the way, unsure of what to do next. “Okay so like, this has to be when we're like what, fifteen or sixteen. So we're like . . . what, we've trapped in the nineties or something?” Eddie suggested. “How did that happen?”

“I thought the Townhouse seemed too quiet last night,” Richie grumbled. “Bill was fucking sloshed, there is no way he would have been able to stay quiet. We must have gotten caught up in like a paradox or something. Maybe like a portkey from Harry Potter.”

“You know I never read that series. Come on, my mom thought witchcraft was against God's ways.” Eddie muttered, his eyes widening suddenly. “Oh my God, my mother is alive.”

“Looks like I'll be swinging around for seconds,” Richie muttered, getting a dark glare from Eddie. Even after all those years, mom jokes -mainly Eddie's mom jokes- weren't something out of Richie's

routine. What could he say? He was a simple man with even simpler jokes.

Eddie's mother had passed away two years ago. It was rough on him, mostly because he had never been alone before, though that didn't matter much now as Myra had swooped in shortly after Sonia's death. She took the place his mother had left and they had been together ever since.

"We'll just try to avoid her, okay?" Richie mentioned a bit softly. "There has to be a reason for this. Come on! Think about how many times travel comics we used to read."

"There was always like, some rip in a paradox or someshit," Eddie mentioned to him. "Oh my god! Are we gonna rip apart the universe if we speak to them?"

"Okay okay, calm down, Marty," Richie insisted, glancing over at the other briefly. "Now we just have to figure out how to get back to the future. Like in the movie!"

"They had an actual time machine there, Rich. This isn't a Delorean and you aren't a genius and I'm not Michael J. Fox. Maybe we're just hallucinating."

Richie scoffed. "Of course this isn't a Delorean, it's a much better looking car, thank you very much."

“Not the point, dipshit. How the hell are we gonna go back to our time!? I’m supposed to be getting married! Oh my god... Myra. What if she doesn’t find me and she thinks I left her? Then she’ll see you’re not there either and she’ll think the worst.”

“Thanks, asshole,” Richie muttered, rolling his eyes at him.

There had to be a reason for this. Time travel wasn’t real! They were just having some wild fever dream. All that salty food they ate went to their brains and they were completely losing it.

Eddie turned -mid-crisis- to see Richie opening the door to the car.
“What are you doing?”

“There is a key ring on my bike. I wanna grab it.” He admitted.
“Remember when my dad biked over my bike? My keyring got destroyed and I wanna snag it before that happens.”

“Richie, come on. It’s a fucking key ring. We have more important things to solve! Richie!” Eddie watched as the other male hurried out of the car and across the street to where his old bike was lying alongside the grass. He lifted it carefully, inspecting it with wonder.

Richie’s parents made good money, even if they didn’t show it off, and while they weren’t always the best listeners, they more or less gave Richie whatever he wanted when he asked for it. One of those things had been the bike and even though it wasn’t flashy like Bill’s, it was stylish all the same.

Richie was about to pull the Street Fighter keychain off the handlebar when he stopped, looking over to the voice that called out to him. Eddie's younger self approached carefully, those ridiculous red shorts riding up as he moved cautiously towards the stranger.

"What are you doing?" He asked carefully. Richie opened his mouth to speak but found it impossible to come up with words.

"Oh come on, Richie the one time you fucking shut your mouth?" The adult Eddie muttered from inside the car.

"That isn't yours. Didn't anyone ever tell you that touching something that isn't yours is a complete and total violation of privacy?" The young version of Eddie rambled, his hands falling onto his hips as he looked the man up and down. "Richie!"

Suddenly the younger version of Richie approached, looking between the younger Eddie and his older self. He adjusted his glasses slightly. "Why are you touching my bike, old man?"

"Old man?" The adult Richie replied. "I just turned thirty. How the fuck old are you?"

"Fifteen. Thirty is old, dude. Why are you touching my shit?"

"Didn't want to run it over," Richie replied dumbly.

Eddie watched as his younger self rolled his eyes, his hands falling to his hips as he watched him. “Really? Run it over on the grass. What, were you going to steal it?”

“Why would I steal it?”

“Why would you touch it if you weren’t going to steal it.”

“Is everything okay up here?” Beverly asked, making her way back up from the water below. She eyed the older Richie carefully and unlike the other two idiots, she saw the resemblance almost automatically. “Rich, do you know him?”

“Am I supposed to?” Younger Richie asked dryly.

“He looks like you. Like he could be your dad or something.”

“I’m too young to be his dad,” Richie commented, pausing when he realized he had three teenagers just staring at him, waiting for an explanation. “But I’m related to his dad.”

“Richie no,” Eddie groaned, going to slump down in the passenger seat of the car. He couldn’t listen to any more of it. Even if their fate completely laid in the hands of their younger selves, actually listening to Richie make small talk with them made Eddie want to scream.

When Richie returned to the car, he told Eddie what happened. He panicked and told the kids that he was the cousin of Richie's father. It wasn't too far fetched because he did have an older cousin that looked pretty similar to what he looked like now. "Not like I am gonna go to my fucking house or something. Even if I did, my parents wouldn't notice, but still. Not like I'll tell them about it."

"You never talked to your parents about shit?" Eddie questioned.

"Okay Oedipus, like you told mommy dearest everything." Richie snapped, reaching up to hang the Street Fighter keychain to the rearview mirror. He smiled, touching it gently before getting back on track. "Better to be on their good sides until we can return home."

"Good sides until you realize someone stole your keychain," Eddie mentioned, watching the chain sway slightly as they drove off.

It was off to see everything as it was. It was off but it was also right. The memories slowly coming back as they drove back to the townhouse.

"Okay, we have to think about the reason why we're here," Eddie broke the silence. "There has to be that."

"We read too many comics and watched too many movies, man. Why do you think we're here for a reason?" Richie asked. He didn't want to show it, but he was panicking. How the hell were they going to come back? Were they going to come back? He had an upcoming meeting with NBC about hosting SNL one night. Come on. Destiny couldn't fuck with that. Could it?

“And what other suggestions do you have? Cause one of the last things I remember about last night was you wishing you could go back in time to-“ Eddie stopped talking then and looked out the window. “We need to find a newspaper. I need to check the date.”

Richie frowned at that. “Why the hell do you need to check the date?”

“I think we’re in the same year I told you I wanted to be with you,” Eddie muttered, a light blush tinting his cheek. It’s been years and it still hurts.

Richie did stop the car then and Eddie almost jumped out of it, followed by the other closely, and walked into the store. “Fuck,” he muttered under his breath as he checked the date printed on The Derry Daily.

Richie took the newspaper from him and cursed under his breath. It read ‘24th June 1991.’

“Hey! If you keep reading that you’ll have to buy it,” the old man, owner of the store, yelled at them. Which made them snap out of his trance.

“Sorry, sir,” Eddie managed to say before storming out of the place.

“Eddie wait!” Richie followed his suit and grabbed his arm to stop him. “What’s wrong? I mean, this is all wrong but still.”

Eddie didn’t pull away from him, just looked up and sighed, almost looking defeated. “Three days from now, I’m gonna tell you I love you and you’re gonna break my heart.”

“Okay, can we not like to say it like that,” Richie grumbled, shoving his hands into his pockets. “I broke my own heart too, you know.”

“Everything changed after that. We weren’t close the way we used to be because we were both just so shattered after that.”

Eddie remembered all the pain that came from Richie shutting him down. The rejection that was too much for him to bear to the point where he swallowed his pride and chose to stay with someone he knew wasn’t good for him.

“So what is that some sort of significance?” Richie asked him.

“Maybe,” Eddie suggested, rubbing his temples.

“Well fuck Eddie!” Richie circled, unsure of what to do next. They were in such a tight situation there seemed like no real solution for them. “What if . . . look hear me out. We both said we wish we could take it back, that we could go back and change it, what if that’s why we are here?”

“You can’t be serious.”

“Do you have any other explanation?” Richie demanded. “It’s the only thing making sense! Maybe I am supposed to confess my feelings and then we can go back and I don’t know, see if it changes anything.”

“That would change everything, Rich,” Eddie said softly.

There would be so many choices that Eddie would have done differently. So many regrets he would no longer have; so many secrets he would no longer swallow down. Life would have been better if he had allowed himself not to take such a hard hit when it came to Richie shutting him down. Or more so, if Richie would have loved him back.

Richie looked everywhere but at Eddie. He was adjusting his glasses and fixing his footing the same way he would when he was just a kid and would try to act like nothing was bothering him, even if the entire world was crumbling at his feet.

“I wouldn’t be alone if I wasn’t a coward,” Richie said suddenly turning to face Eddie again. “You wouldn’t be with Myra if I had been honest.”

“You don’t know that. Maybe it wouldn’t change anything,” Eddie suggested.

Maybe they would be a horrible couple. Maybe it would have been terrible; nobody knew for sure.

“Life isn’t going that great right, Eduardo, so I think even the smallest change might be for the better.”

“So what are you saying, Rich?”

Richie smirked and patted Eddie’s cheek gently. “What I’m saying is, Eds Spagghetts, we get my younger self to get it fucking together, grow some balls and tell young you how he feels.”

“Oh come on,” Eddie scoffed. “Do you think you’d be able to convince yourself? Do you not remember how thick-headed you were?”

“So? I’ll just show up and be all “Christmas of the future” and warn him not to be a little dick and confess his feelings.”

“Okay first off, telling him to be a little dick will just make him want to be a big dick and saying “confess your feelings” isn’t exactly ideal. You’re closeted, Richie. And knowing you, you’ll panic if you found out someone else knew your secret. Also, do you think telling our younger selves who we are is the best idea?”

“Why not?”

“For one, do you think you’ll believe it? I mean, I wouldn’t. I would have screamed “stranger danger” and kicked you in the nards.” Eddie confessed.

“God you were such a scaredy-cat as a kid.”

“Dickhead, I played it safe! Also, the one time I didn’t play safe I had it blow up in my face.” Eddie pointed out with a glare.

Ouch. That hurt. “I don’t know. Maybe we could like, talk to them without revealing who we are? I also said I was my cousin, we could just play on that,”

“It’s worth a try. I don’t see any other way out of this insane situation.”

“All right look, let’s head back to the townhouse and make a plan of this okay?” Richie suggested, trying to think rationally. Wow, Richie Tozier, being rational. Write that down.

Eddie nodded and walked back to the car. This was insane but they had to try. Maybe he could be finally happy. Or not... but they had to try.

Richie got into the driver’s side and, after a bit, started the car to drive back to the townhouse. Richie was getting his second chance,

and he was sure as fuck he was gonna make it work. Or he was gonna kill his younger self.

Notes for the Chapter:

Thank you again for reading. Please tell us what you think down below.

3. Dancer - Queen

Notes for the Chapter:

We hope you all enjoy this. Please comment and tell us what you like!

This should have been easy. Richie should have been able to talk some sense into his younger self and then he and Eddie would be back to their old lives. Maybe things would be better or maybe it would be completely different and utterly insane. Either way, this should have been a piece of cake.

But it wasn't. It fucking sucked.

For one, they were stalking the younger versions of themselves, which was absolute insanity. Richie had come up with a few ideas that more or less just had them stalking the group for as long as they could before finally ambushing the kids. Eddie, the wiser of the two, pointed out how fucking ridiculous that was on its own.

“What are you going to do, Rich? Hang around the arcade? That’s creepy, even for the nineties and I don’t have enough money with me to bail you out of jail.”

“I don’t see you coming up with any better ideas,” Richie argued from the bathroom. He needed a shower and a change of clothes but found that all he had left were the outfits he prepared for the wedding and the weekend. Nicer attire that he never wore unless working related dinner or televised or recorded special.

Eddie always looked good and professional with his collared shirts and Italian loafers. His job might have been utter garbage, but it pays well and Richie wasn't someone to argue with money. He was currently shaving in the bathroom, trying to make himself look less like someone who would star as the pedophile in one of those movies they showed in school.

"Look, you seem to know the schedule pretty well. We have three days until you make your confession. Anything else we need to know?" Richie asked from the bathroom.

Outside of it, Eddie was using the pad and paper and the townhouse offered to make a mock calendar. He moved to stand in the bathroom with him, trying not to stare at Richie as he continued shaving.

"Summer just began right? Okay so I make my confession on Wednesday and Friday is the Summer Sensation festival, remember?"

Of course, he fucking remembered. They threw it every year. Big fair that was loud and obnoxious for such a small town; there were lights and fireworks and carnival rides. They had a cut-off area that was closer to a dance that the high school would have closed. They had decorations and music though it wasn't anything special.

Richie ended up skipping the festival because he was soaking in his misery. It was after that things changed. Eddie was no longer his best friend but just a part of the group. The shift began leaving them both depressed and alone.

“Beverly went with Bill even though she should have gone with Ben.”

“Ben and I hung out that night,” Eddie admitted. “Did Mike or Stan go?”

“Beats me. I was having a pity party for one in my bedroom.”

“We have two days to convince you that it’s okay to be gay. After that, I guess it doesn’t matter. Would we go to the festival?”

“I don’t know man,” Richie tossed his racer down and dunked his face in the sink filled with water. He wiped away the drips and the shaving cream with a towel, turning to face Eddie again. “Even if I did confess my feelings I doubt I would have been very open about it. Probably wouldn’t make you keep it a secret.”

“I would have been okay with that. I mean, when I told you how I felt I think it was more of a split decision type deal.” Eddie confessed, watching Richie for a good moment before continuing. “Anyway. What now?”

“Well, it’s Monday. What would we be doing on a Monday?”

There was no right or wrong answer. It was summer and they were kids. None of them got jobs until the year after that, so this was their last summer to just dick around and have fun. They could have been by the quarry, the arcade, the clubhouse, or at someone’s house.

They decided to sat fuck it and try the arcade because they didn't want to lose daylight. Richie dressed and combed his hair, not realizing that Eddie was staring. He thought that he must have looked different in the clothes he wore and had a clean face but he wouldn't have been that appealing. He never saw himself as attractive.

He was lanky and hairy, and blind. He had a nice dick but the only person he wanted to touch or see it didn't want him back.

Driving to the arcade they were relieved to see the bikes out front. They made their way inside, keeping it casual as they looked around. Younger Richie was at his usual machine though no one was crowding around him.

Richie made a b-line for him, smiling as he approached. "Well, looky here. Fancy running into you."

Richie tore his gaze away from the machine and paused. "Oh. Hey. Did my mom send you here?"

"Mags? No, no. My buddy here and I thought it would be cool to check out the local venues. Stumbled upon this beauty. Who doesn't love a game of Street Fighter?"

Richie snorted but didn't even spare a glance to his old self, too concentrated on his game. "Yeah, I'm sure you know a lot about it. I bet you're too cool for your age right?"

Eddie saw the look of total offense that crossed Richie's face and couldn't help but laugh. Richie was being burnt by himself and he was enjoying every second of it.

"You think you're the best cause you got the highest score here?" Older Richie asked his hands on his waist. God, he was the perfect image of an adult getting irritated by an annoying kid.

"How do you know that?" Kid Richie asked, still not averting his eyes from the screen.

"I just assumed," he lied. He worked so hard on that high score it was still one of his biggest accomplishments. "I bet you five dollars I can beat your ass."

Five bucks in the nineties weren't much different from five bucks in their own time but money was money. "Let's go old man. Your ass is grass and I'm gonna mow it."

Both Eddie's pinched the bridge of their nose as the two Richie's began battling. Leave it to Richie to get caught up in a battle with his younger self.

"You kids come here a lot?" Eddie asked the younger version of himself.

“Mostly yeah. It’s cool.” Younger Eddie shrugged, looking around the arcade. “Kinda gross but it’s fine if you wipe down the machines first.”

“Suggest carrying around hand wipes,” Eddie mentioned, watching as his younger self went into his fanny pack and grabbed an antibacterial wipe to cleanse his hands.

Richie across the way was destroying his younger self in the game, having used moves that he learned during his first year of college. Fifteen-year-old Richie was a good player but he didn’t stand a chance against thirty-year-old Richie.

He wasn’t a sore winner when the machine rang off, announcing his big win. His younger self seemed impressed nonetheless. “Not bad for an old guy,”

“You’re not so bad for a toddler,” Richie said proudly. “What do you say to a couple of milkshakes huh? My treat.”

“Oh.” Richie, well the younger of the two, muttered as he turned and looked across the arcade. His face settled on the two Eddie’s and he automatically began adjusting his glasses. “Eds and me had plans actually,”

“Bring him along.” Richie insisted. “Come on! More the merrier and all that shit. Besides, we’re family. We should be bonding right?”

“Yeah. Okay.”

“Dope little man. Let’s head on out of here and celebrate my big win,”

Richie leads his younger self outside and was quickly followed by the two Eddie’s.

“Is this seriously your car?” Younger Richie asked, approaching it carefully.

“Indeed it is. Saw it in a magazine when I was a kid and knew one day I’d buy myself one.”

“I saw the same one! It’s sick, dude.”

“I think it’s horrific.” Younger Eddie insisted, looking at the car in disgust. “If you were to go up against an eighteen-wheeler this thing would crunch you up like an accordion. This thing looks like a death trap.”

“Yeah but I look amazing while driving it, and that’s what’s important.” Older Richie commented, tossing older Eddie a wink as he twisted the keys in his finger.

Both Eddies glanced at him though they were vastly different. The thirty-year-old was bored and annoyed while the fifteen-year-old

seemed surprised. There was lingering in his glance that Richie recognized deep inside of him though he couldn't place it at the time.

The older two hopped into the car while the younger two got on their bikes. They met back up at the diner and soon enough they were sipping on milkshakes and keeping up a light conversation that didn't get them caught off guard.

"So what are your names?" Younger Eddie asked curiously.

They should have come up with this and they partially did. Richie said he was his cousin but didn't give a name which should have worked out perfectly fine but now they had to come up with something. Not like they could have given their real names.

"Oh um. I am..."

"That's Morgan," Richie said quickly. He placed his hand on Eddie's chest smiling brightly. "That is Morgan and I am Theodore."

Morgan? Eddie looked at him with a slight frown and made a mental note to ask Richie about that name, having either something utterly ridiculous or something lamely simple from Richie. But Morgan? That name didn't fall on any of those categories. He kinda liked it.

"And you're Richie's cousin?" Little Eddie asked, pulling adult Eddie out of his internal inquiries.

Richie bobbed his head, sipping on his milkshake.

“Cousin Theodore. Do you go by Teddy?” Younger Richie asked, laughing after a moment. “Ha! Teddy and Eddie. Cute!”

“Please stop.”

“Cute, cute, cute!” Older Richie challenged, laughing and causing his companion to roll his eyes.

Younger Eddie sat up, choosing to eat his milkshake with the long spoon given. “So how long are you two here for?”

“Oh. We don’t know yet.” Older Eddie, or Morgan it seemed, answered.

“We didn’t plan on coming here. Personal shit.” Older Richie, aka Teddy, waved him off. “So, tell us about you two. You guys like a couple or something?”

The other three nearly spat their drinks out due to how blunt he was. Their younger selves blushed deeply while older Eddie just sent a glare to his friend.

“Of course not!”

“No! Gross!”

“Hey hey! No need to get defensive. Just thought . . . You look good together. Don’t sue me.”

“I’m not gay.” Younger Richie said automatically.

“Yeah.” Was all that came out of the younger Eddie, who sat rigid in his seat. “Are you?” He asked quietly.

Adult Richie raised a brow to him. “Me? Oh yeah. Totally.” He admitted. “Been gay my entire life. Haven’t always been able to say it but the feelings always lingered there.”

“Are you two together?” Younger Richie asked curiously.

“No.” Older Eddie replies swiftly. “We’re just best friends. Like you two.”

“But we could be more,” Richie added pointedly, not wanting to put anything in the heads of their younger selves. “For now, we’re partners.”

“Like in crime?” Younger Eddie asked, looking between the two.

“Oh yeah. That’s the hottest thing in New York: be gay, do crimes.” Richie smirked.

Eddie rolled his eyes, pushing the glass closer to him. “Drink your milkshake, Trashmouth,”

“That’s my nickname.” Younger Richie sat up suddenly.

Eddie paused, staring wide-eyed at the teen. “Oh? What a small world,”

“Two Trashmouth Tozier’s. Good god.” Younger Eddie groaned.

“We share the sentiment, little one,” adult Eddie sighed before returning his attention to his milkshake.

“Oh come on, Ed- Morgan. Don’t be such a party pooper. I haven’t seen you this sad since I broke it off with your mom,” old Richie said with a smirk.

Young Richie laughed and high fived his older self. “Dude, now I know where I got it from! Shacking up with fugly moms must run in my family.”

At that moment, both Eddies brought their hands to their faces and in

their usual fashion, said quickly and in unison. “ *Beep beep, dipshit .*”

That made the pair of Richies just stop and stare in shock. Getting caught was the last thing Richie wanted and he just laughed it off, rolling his eyes as the younger counterpart changed the subject.

“That was adorable, Eddie Spaghetti,” interrupted young Richie, staring at his friend.

Both adults let out the breath they were holding, thankful for little Richie.

“Come on, two Trashmouths aren’t that bad. You laugh at my jokes all the time,” Richie-Teddy said, gently punching Eddie’s arm playfully.

“If your jokes are bad as his jokes, he does it only cause he’s your friend,” little Eddie interrupted before sipping his milkshake.

“You wound me, little Eddie. I’m wounded. Tell me he’s joking,” adult Richie said in an exaggerated tone.

“Whatever I say, it’s gonna make you crack a joke, most likely about my mother. So I’m not gonna comment on anything and I’ll leave you with the eternal doubt.” Eddie-Morgan replied with a roll of his eyes. He stood up to excuse himself to wash his hands while younger Richie rummaged around in his pocket for some change to play something on the jukebox.

“Maybe I could make a joke about his mom for a change?” Richie suggested, gesturing to the young counterpart of Eddie once they were alone. “Though something tells me you get enough of that from that guy over there so how about I just talk about how rad that fanny pack is?”

Younger Eddie looked down, unsure of this Teddy fellow was being serious or not. So many people mocked him for it, he had found most of them to use sarcasm just to mask what they were trying to rely on was that he looked utterly ridiculous.

“I’m serious. That shit is useful as fuck. I wish I had the guts to wear one when I was a kid.” Richie admitted honestly. He licked his lips as a fond memory came to him and Richie smiled thinly as he continued “The guy I’m with used to wear one all the time and I’d give him shit about it, but I just liked annoying him.”

“Why would you like to annoy someone?”

“Some people are good at expressing their feelings, you know? Guys . . . we’re taught to be manly all the fucking time and not be affectionate and stuff, but I wanted to be. I wanted to hold his hand and do all that cutesy shit, but I never had the nerve so instead, I’ll just say stupid jokes to rile him up. I figured any reaction was a good reaction, even if he wanted to kick my ass half the time.”

“Are you good at expressing feelings now?” Younger Eddie asked quietly.

"I'm a bit better, but I'm still working on it," Richie admitted, swirling his straw around his melted ice cream. He perked up when he heard the next song came on. "Oh *shit!* I haven't heard this in ages!"

Younger Eddie groaned loud, hanging his head on the table. "Every fucking time!" He muttered aloud. "He's been on a fucking *Hot Space* kick ever since he got a job at the record store. Like, it's all the fucking listens to."

"Well, you better listen well then, Spaghetti! This song is iconic, whether or not the masses agree."

Younger Eddie lifted his head, watching as the man across from him, -- Teddy -- danced in his seat. The stupid curl of his lip and the bob of his head. It was familiar in a way that Eddie couldn't place and he found it tickling something in his stomach.

This guy was so open and careless; Eddie had never seen anything like it. He admitted to liking boys in a time and a place that could result in his life being ruined by the snap of one's fingers. And yet he just didn't give a single fuck. He danced along to the music, not caring who was watching. It was the most simultaneously the craziest and tamest thing he had ever witnessed.

Older Eddie made his way out of the bathroom, groaning when he heard the song playing over the speakers. He paused by the jukebox where younger Richie was swaying to the music. Not dancing the later his older counterpart was, but just enjoying the music as his eyes lingered on the other boy across the way.

“ *Dancer* , huh?” Eddie muttered quietly.

“ *Hot Space* is the greatest Queen album in existence.” Younger Richie said softly, his gaze never leaving his friend.

“So I’ve heard.” Eddie sighed, having remembered all the times Richie would force him to listen to it after discovering it at Doctor Records. He got the job as soon as he turned fifteen and even though he was more or less just a stock boy, he made good money and spent most of it on records he got half off.

“So that carnival thing is coming up soon. Are you gonna go?” Eddie asked, leaning against the jukebox, trying very hard to be casual.

Younger Richie snapped out of his staring phase, shrugging lazily. “Don’t know. Gotta see what the others are up to.” He mentioned.

“Losers Club, right? R-Ted. Teddy, he mentioned it to me. And your mom mentioned it to him.”

“My mom talks about me to other people?” Richie asked curiously. “Talks or complaints?”

Eddie had always been aware of Richie’s strenuous relationship with his parents. They worked hard and didn’t always appear to care, but they were worlds away from his mother, who cared too much to the point of basically wanting to destroy him.

“They talk, Rich. Parents don’t always talk to their kids or make it seem like they care, but they do in their strange way.”

Younger Richie bobbed his head, taking his simple words into account.

“You should ask your friend if he wants to go. Might be fun, just the two of you.” Eddie ventured, hoping the younger male would take the hint he was giving.

Young Richie was quiet again, turning his head so he could look to his friend. Eddie followed his gaze, watching as his younger counterpart laughed at whatever Richie was saying. It was strange seeing himself like this. Laughing and smiling and of course, it was all because of Richie. It seemed no matter the age or timeline, Richie would always be the one to make him happy.

“I’ll think about it.” Younger Richie mumbled, going to push another coin into the machine and flip through the song selection. He chose something other than the synthpop slash disco album Queen put out and they went back to the table to join the others.

“What’s the laughter about?” Eddie asked as he slid back into the booth. “You’re not that funny, so you can’t be telling jokes.”

“Oof. Getting wounded by two cuties in one day. This is cruel, Morgan.” Richie muttered, placing his hand over his heart.

“Teddy was just telling me about stuff he did when he was our age.” Younger Eddie admitted with a bright smile. “You guys are awesome.”

“What did you tell him exactly?”

“Oh, nothing. Just the time we climbed the standpipe and nearly falling off of it.”

“Sounds like something I would do.” Younger Richie admitted.

Young Eddie snorted, sending a glare his way. “You would.”

“Maybe Staniel? It seems like something he would do. Hang from the standpipe without any expression.”

Both Richie and Eddie, the adult versions, froze at the thought of Stan. He had always been an odd bug, Stanley Uris. A bit of a perfectionist tied with a strange chaotic energy that no one understood. He tried so hard to be this specific type of person that no one ever really saw that the pressure was eating him up inside.

“How is Stan?” Richie asked casually.

“Fine, I guess. Probably at home studying the bible or whatever.”

“Torah, jackass.”

“Does he ever talk to you guys about anything that’s bugging him?” Eddie mentioned, crossing his arms over his chest.

“You mean other than Richie? No. He’s a pretty laid back, dude.” Younger Eddie mentioned, his eyes dropping to his wristwatch as an alarm went off. “Shit. I gotta go.”

“Mummy dearest will be missing her little lad!” Young Richie said, his faux British accent still needing some work.

“Shut up! Um, I guess we’ll see you later.” The teen mentioned, standing to his feet as he got out of the booth. He looked between the two adults, though his eyes lingered lastly on the older Richie -- Teddy -- before he hurried out of the diner.

“See you on the flip side, little man.” Richie waved off.

“Eds, wait! I’ll ride with you.” The other boy stood, slipping out of the booth and following him out. “Later Ted!”

“Well. That was certainly a trip.” Richie muttered, hanging his head back.

"You can say that again," Eddie spoke, thanking the waitress as she brought over the check.

Richie pulled out his wallet and paid and the two went back to the townhouse. They mostly stayed in Eddie's room, going over the timeline that Eddie wrote out for them.

"All right, one day down." He said, crossing Monday off the list. "Now we have all tomorrow to convince younger you to ask younger me to the festival on Wednesday."

"Doesn't sound too hard."

"It's obvious you liked me. I mean, you have a thick head but the entire time you had that horrendous song playing, you just kept watching me from afar." Eddie mentioned, leaning back in the desk chair. "I don't know how I never noticed it before. I mean, there were little things here and there."

"I told you that I used to bug you," Richie confessed to him from where he sat against the head of the bed. "I mean, I told younger you that I used to annoy you -- Morgan. Anything to get a reaction out of you."

"So you being a dick was your way of flirting with me?" Eddie asked, receiving a mock tip-of-the-hat from Richie. The male rolled his eyes, turning back to the desk. "I'm honored you took the time to pester me so much."

“Do you think this will change anything?” Richie asked, moving to lay on his stomach, facing the end of the bed so he was closer to Eddie. “Like, do you think we’ll go back to our time, do you think we’ll . . .” Richie lifted his head, gesturing between the two.

“Well, what?”

“Do you think we’d be together?”

Eddie sighed, rubbing his temples with his pointer fingers. “I don’t know, Rich,” He admitted. There were so many things in his life that he wished he could have done differently. Chosen a career path that wasn’t so boring and that he had to defend. He opened himself up to the chances of being with someone who didn’t make him feel inferior. Even if he wasn’t with Richie, Eddie wished he hadn’t let the crushing blow of not being with him ruin the chances of being happy in general.

“I don’t know, Rich.”

“If it doesn’t . . . I mean, if we go back to our time and nothing changes, are you still going to marry Myra?”

“Why are you asking me this now?” Eddie snapped, turning to face him once again. “I don’t know, Richie. I don’t know anything anymore, okay? My life has been planned out for me and no, it’s not ideal, but I don’t know if I want to drop everything good in my life just to jump into the unknown.”

“It wouldn’t be unknown,” Richie mentioned suddenly. “I’d be there. Even if you don’t want to give me a shot, I’d still support you. I mean, we could go to a gay club. The guys would lose it for a twink like you.”

Eddie’ narrowed his eyes slowly. “I am not a fucking twink.”

“You’re right. I’ve seen you shirtless. You’re pretty jacked. More like a twunk.”

“A what?!”

“A twunk. It’s a hunky twink. Like, you’re a bottom, but you’re buff. You’re a buffy bottom. A double B.”

“I am not a fucking bottom!” Eddie snapped, standing from his chair.

“I’m a switch if it makes you feel better. You can hit it and quit it both ways if you want to. OW!” Richie hissed as Eddie grabbed a very uncomfortable pillow from the bed and whacked him over the head with it. “What the fuck, man?”

“Get out of my room! We’ll continue tomorrow!”

“All right, all right. Geez.” Richie stood from the bed, making his way out so he could go across the hall to his bedroom. “God, you’re so defensive for a buffy bottom.”

Eddie threw the pillow at him again, groaning as he flopped back onto the bed. It was going to be a long week.

Notes for the Chapter:

LISTEN TO HOT SPACE BY QUEEN AND
EVERYTHING ELSE BY QUEEN!!!!

4. Kids in America - Kim Wilde

When the following day came, the two men went over their plan. Find the boys, talk to the boys, and convince the boys to be together. It seemed easy enough, but things were a little out of sync as they couldn't seem to find their younger selves. They spent the entire morning running around like idiots, trying to locate any member of the Losers club since they were fairly certain that at this point they were still stuck together like glue gave the fact that no love confessions took place.

They were halfway into the afternoon when Richie remembered he used to have morning shifts at the record store once the school year ended. It was an easy job. Unloading the boxes and putting the records out in order. He's swept the floors or put up new posters. Easy money. And add the discount on records. Every teenager's dream.

He had a nine to two-shift, the usual until he got older and wiser and was allowed to lock up and shit. It was after one when they realized this, so they went into town, knowing the Losers were bound to meet up at one point or another. Soon enough, they were proven correct.

Eddie and Bill met up first, parking their bikes along with the ice cream parlor adjacent to the record store. Ben and Beverly showed up next, followed by Stan and Mike, who had just come back from his day of work at the farm.

The adults watched them from afar, trying their best not to creep on them for the time being but also keeping them insight in case they decided to take off. They didn't want to end up with a restraining order or worse, in jail in the nineties; Eddie wouldn't shut up about

germs. When Eddie -little Eddie- and Bill went into the ice cream place, Richie decided that was his cue and headed inside after them. Eddie reluctantly followed, staying close behind as they spied on the boys.

“So are you just buying Richie ice cream?” Bill asked as they looked into the glass to pick their flavors.

“Do I look like I’m made of money?” Younger Eddie asked, going into his fanny pack to pull out his cash. “Besides, he’s the one that worked this morning. Even a moron deserves a treat.”

Eddie knew it was a fucking lie. Sure, he had a small allowance from his mom, but he never spent it because she was always too tight-knit on whatever he did. Truth was, he had enough to buy them all ice cream but he kept that to himself and instead chose to show affection only for Richie for obvious reasons.

“Are you gonna buy Beverly anything?” Younger Eddie asked curiously.

“No. Ben said he’d get her something later,” Bill answered, smiling when it was his turn. He ordered his ice cream, leaving his friend to decide on his own.

Younger Eddie looked over the glass, trying to decide if they should get anything different this time around. As he turned his head to see the next selection he caught sight of Richie and Eddie, or as he knew them, Teddy and Morgan.

“Oh! Hey guys.”

“Sup little man. What’s going on?”

“He’s not little. He’s the average height for his age, stop calling him that.” Adult Eddie muttered.

Richie rolled his eyes, stepping forward. “Alright, what’s going on, big man?”

The younger Eddie smiled at the change of the nickname. “Buying ice cream. Nothing crazy.”

“Bet you’re gonna choose something crazy like vanilla with rainbow sprinkles,” Richie said, wiggling his eyebrows.

Younger Eddie cocked his head, his eyes widening slightly. “How did you know?”

“It’s my go-to flavor, big man. Aside from rocky road.”

Bill appeared, ice cream cone in hand. “W-who this?” He asked.

Richie had gotten that by their teenage years, Bill's stutter was non-existent. He thanked the specialist as well as his speech practice, though it still slipped out now and then.

"Oh. This is Teddy, Richie's cousin. And his friend Morgan." Younger Eddie explained.

When the little bell at the door rang announcing more people entering, Richie waved the younger away. "Go and order. We're not going anywhere."

As the young Eddie went to make his choice, the older two stayed by the window, watching as the young version of their friend stood off to the side, looking out across the way to the group. Beverly sat on top of Ben's bike, laughing at something he was saying.

"She's cute," Richie mentioned. "Girlfriend?"

"Wha? Oh. N-no. Just a f-friend." Bill mentioned with a lick of his ice cream.

Richie caught Eddie's eyes from over Bill's head and while there was a bit of warning there, he found himself continuing. "She seems pretty cozy with that boy out there."

"That's B-Ben. They're just f-friends." He told him.

"I don't know. She seems pretty happy with him if I had to guess." Richie mentioned with a shrug. "My little cousin told me you want to be a writer. I know writers. They have to travel and shit. Settling down would be pretty hard."

"C-couldn't I just have someone come with me?"

"What if they want different things?" Eddie popped up. "We heard Ben wants to be an architect. You don't move around much with that job."

"If you like the girl, shouldn't you do what is best for her?"

"I nev-never thought of that," Bill confessed, frowning down at his ice cream cone. "D-do you think she likes him?"

"Look for yourself, bud." Richie gestured across the way where Beverly was laughing and smiling.

Sure, she would always love Bill, but that was a given. He was sweet and handsome like no one else in town, but it was Ben that cared for her truly. Richie thought back to his timeline, where Beverly had confessed how stupid she had been for not realizing it sooner.

Eddie had mentioned that he spent the night of the Summer Sensational festival with Ben because he had asked Beverly, but she had already been asked by Bill; someone who had good intentions but would only string her along.

“I was g-gonna ask her to the f-f-festival. M-maybe he’ll ask her instead?” Bill wondered. He offered a smile and while it was easy to see he was just a bit heartbroken, Richie and Eddie knew he was a good kid at heart and would only want what’s best for his friends.

Bill exited the shop to meet up with the others, having noticed Richie, or the younger Richie, greeting the group by the bike rack when younger Eddie returned. He was balancing two cones in his hand as well as a small cup, which he offered to Richie. “I had change I wanted to get rid of.” He explained easily. “See you outside?” He asked, lingering for a moment before heading out to meet up with the group.

The older two watched as the younger Eddie passed on his cone as the group chatted. Richie looked down at the small cup, noticing he had been given a small scoop of rocky road. “At least he listens,” He mentions before digging in.

“I always listened to you, dipshit. Even your insufferable mom jokes,” adult Eddie said, shoving him playfully. “Why did he buy you something and nothing to me?” He protested.

“Oh, don’t sweat it, Eds. I just happened to tell him my favorite flavor. Maybe he wants to be on the good side of his future husband’s family,” Richie teased before eating ice cream. “Want some?”

Eddie shook his head and glanced back outside. “You know I don’t like rocky road.”

“Then I’ll buy you your usual. Sprinkles? Or you’re too mature for that, Mr. Risk Analyst?” He asked with a smirk.

“Tell me again why I fell for you?” Eddie should backtrack now. Try to make it clear that it was all in the past. All feelings were forgotten, weren’t they? Yes. They were. Or not? Fuck, Kaspbrak, get it together.

“Impeccable good looks? Fantastic personality? My big dick.” Richie said nonchalantly, ignorant about the inner fight Eddie was having with himself.

“Richie! Children!” Eddie hissed, turning away from Richie with a roll of his eyes.

Richie could only smirk, going up to buy Eddie’s usual cone. He passed it onto him, gazing out the window after a moment. It was strange looking at themselves in this odd third-person view but he found himself watching not himself or even Eddie, but the friend they had lost along the way.

Stan stood there on his bike, laughing and smiling along with the others; looking like he didn’t have a care in the world. “We have to talk to him.”

“Haven’t you ever heard of the butterfly effect?” Eddie asked him quietly. “If we change too much we could risk fucking up the entire universe.”

“So? We already set up Ben and Bev, you don’t want to take the chance at saving Stanley?”

“What can we do, Rich? Tell him to avoid taking baths after college?”

“God, would you stop being so cynical?”

Eddie rolled his eyes again, putting his focus on his ice cream cone. Richie led them out and together they went across to the square where the Losers Club was hanging out.

“Salutations, little ones.” Richie greeted them cheerfully.

The group, well four out of the seven, glanced over with a round of confusion. Mike was the first to speak, currently the boldest of them all. “Um, hi.”

“This is Richie’s cousin Teddy,” Eddie said eagerly licking at his half-finished cone.

“And this is Morgan.” Richie gestured to Eddie beside him. “What are you kids up to?”

“We’re not kids,” Stan said to him blankly.

“You are correct! You’re one hundred percent correct, young man. I respect you for your honesty. You are a wise man beyond your years.”

Stan looked to Richie, younger Richie, and hoped for an explanation for his cousin's rambles.

Eddie pinched the bridge of his nose, shaking his head as he took over. “We hope we are not bothering you guys. Teddy here just wants to spend some quality time with his cousin.”

“Family time, little man. We gotta have it.”

“I don’t mind.” Little Eddie mentioned looking to the rest of the group. “You guys don’t care right?”

“I don’t see why not,” Ben mentioned, always the nice guy. “We were gonna go swimming if you guys are up to it.”

“I think so. Yeah, that would be awesome.”

“We didn’t bring out suits.” Eddie pointed out.

Younger Richie snickered, popping the wheel of his bike. “Neither did we,”

The group wheeled off, leaving the older group in the dust. “Are we seriously going with them?” Eddie asked quietly.

“Do you wanna leave this place or not?” Richie asked, tossing his empty ice cream cup into the trash can.

Eddie groaned, tossing the rest of his cone out as he followed him back to the Camaro. They drove to the cliff, finding the bikes stacked up by the jumping cliff. A familiar shiver went down their backs as they watched their younger selves strip from their clothing down to their underwear.

Richie watched as his younger self checked out the younger Eddie, adjusting his glasses nervously as he tried to act cool and uncaring. Younger Eddie reached up, carefully removing young Richie’s glasses and placing them into his fanny pack for safekeeping.

It was a sweet gesture that used to make Richie’s stomach grumble in such a peculiar way.

“You did like me huh?” Richie asked quietly.

Eddie beside him continued to watch the two, noticing how they blushed and elbowed one another; their little version of flirting.

“More than I should have honestly,” Eddie mentioned somberly, shoving his hands into his pockets as he approached the young group.

“Thought you guys pussied out.” Younger Richie called out, squinting as they approached.

“Nice language, Trashmouth,” adult Eddie commented.

“Are you going to swim?” Beverly asked curiously.

“I think we’re a little past jumping,” Eddie mentioned, gesturing to the cliff.

“Lame.” Young Richie called out. “Eds, if I ever end up being that booring, shoot me dead.”

“Can’t he just shoot you right now?” Stan asked lazily.

“Shot through the heart! And you’re to blame. Stanley, you give love a bad name.” Young Rich sang dramatically.

Stanley locked eyes with Bill. “I’m gonna push him.” He decided.

“I’ll meet you boys down there,” Beverly said after a moment, taking a running start before leaping off the cliffside.

Beverly was always the bravest and still was, especially after all the shit she went through. There was so much Eddie and Richie wanted to say to her. To stop her from making so many bad choices. But that would be for later on. And besides, if they played it right, she would skip all that and be with Ben of her life.

After Bev went Ben, who had been spending more time with the track team and starting to lose that baby fat of his. Then Bill and when he realized he was with Richie and Eddie, Stan hurried after the others.

“Are you guys coming?” Younger Eddie asked curiously.

“We’ll meet you guys down at the bottom.” His counterpart relief.

“Chicken,” Younger Richie mocked. “Bok, bok, bok!”

“Shut up! He’s being careful. Nothing wrong with that.” Younger Eddie snapped, shoving the other teen away.

Richie grabbed hold of Eddie’s hand, tugging him towards the edge. “Let’s blow this pop stand, Eds. Meet you at the water’s edge, grandpa!”

With that, the two teens disappeared off the ledge, splashing down below.

“I can’t believe we used to jump so carelessly. I can’t believe we used

to swim in that dirty water. What was wrong with us?”

“We were kids, Eds. Kids are supposed to be carefree.” Richie reminded him. “You sure you don’t wanna jump for old time’s sake?”

“I’m sure. Let’s go down to the shore and supervise like the lame adults we are,”

Richie took one last look at the scenery from being so high up before following Eddie back to the car. They drove down and parked in the tiny man-made lot, going to stay on the shore and watch over their younger selves.

They didn’t swim for a good while, choosing to just observe but eventually, their younger selves, as well as Beverly, decided to start a splash war right beside them, prompting them to join in. Despite his frustration, Eddie stripped down and joined them in the water, heading over to sit in the rocks in the middle.

They sat back in the sun as the teens play chicken with one another, leaving one out like always. Stan came to sit on the edge of the rock, staring blankly out as his friends played on.

“Stanley, right? Richie has told us a lot about you.” Richie lied easily. “Clever and smart. Too good for this small town.”

“Didn’t know he thought that highly of me,” Stan confessed.

“Richie doesn’t like to talk about his feelings.” Eddie piped in. “You should though. It’s healthy too.”

“Really? Isn’t it annoying?” Stan asked him.

“Some people like to believe so but the world is full of a lot of crazy shit and we’re only human. Talking about things that bother us can’t make it any worse.”

“Do you ever talk to anybody?” Richie asked curiously.

Stan took his head, looking away from his friends. “Nothing worth talking about. Just dumb stuff. Nothing worth getting worried over.”

“I used to think that,” Richie confessed. “I used to think that I was completely alone in the world but man I was wrong.”

“Did you end up talking to someone?”

“I started seeing a therapist and at first I was super dodgy but things got better the more I opened up.”

“My dad thinks therapists are all quacks just trying to get a quick paycheck,” Stan revealed.

“My mom was the same,” Eddie confessed. “In college, I started getting counseling and it helped with my stress level.”

“Even if it’s not a therapist, you know any of your friends would be happy to listen.” Richie pointed out. “Even that funny looking one. He may not express it well but he cares about you. About all of you.”

“The others care too.” Eddie pointed out. “It’s scary you know, finding your way through the darkness but remember that you’re not alone Stan. You have people who love you and won’t turn you away just because you’re not feeling one hundred percent.”

“Stan the Man! Let’s go!” Younger Richie called out. “Mike is out. You’re in!”

“I better get out there,” Stan mentioned, carefully slipping back into the water.

“Just think about it, okay? No one wants to suffer in silence.”

With that, Stanley left the rock and Mike took his place, going to sit on the far end across the way to cheer on his friends.

“Hey, kid!” Richie called out to Mike. “Go to Florida.”

Mike cocked his head but nodded simply. "Okay." He decided, turning back to the group.

Richie smirked, proudly of both himself and Eddie. "Well, I guess we got everything sorted but one thing, Eddie my love."

Eddie sighed and decided not to comment on the nickname. Not knowing if it was cause it was annoying or just because he didn't want to show how it affected him. He preferred any silly nickname than loving ones. They made everything so much worse and harder.

"We just have to make sure you don't break my heart," Eddie said softly, not looking at him, just staring at the group of careless children. "What if when we come back, reality changed so much that we aren't talking to each other?"

Richie hadn't thought about it, but Eddie was right. Fuck. Damn you, Eddie! But he wasn't going to show any doubt, even though he knew Eddie was braver than he was, by a long shot, and since they were kids. "Nah, I'd never deprive you of my looks and my excellent humor, Eds."

"What did I tell you about calling me Eds?" He groaned, finally glancing back at Richie. "And please, deprive me of that pleasure. I'm begging you," he added with a slight chuckle.

"No can do, little man. Whether you like it or not, you have a thing about this." Richie decided. He stood up, smirking down to where Eddie was sitting. He moved his hips playfully, running a single finger down his chest slowly. "You want all of this."

“Teenage me was a moron.”

“I think you still want a piece of this.”

“Adult me would be a moron if he did.”

“Come on, Eduardo. Come and get a piece.” Richie moved his hips more, shimmying where he stood.

Unknown to him, younger Eddie, who had been sitting on top of Bill’s arms, looked away from the game of chicken and had his eyes focused on the two of them. The blissful smile on Morgan’s face as he watched Teddy dance on the rock. It was utterly ridiculous and so carefree that he found himself longing for such a feeling.

So distracted, he didn’t see Bev giving the quickly timed push and fell back onto the water, ultimately losing the game for him and Bill. He pushed himself up out of the water, ignoring Bill’s annoyance and instead chose to watch as Morgan tackled Teddy into the water.

“You okay, Doctor K?” Younger Richie asked, noticing his staring. He looked over, finding no one other than Mike on top of the rock.

“Huh?” Younger Eddie looked away, smiling easily to him. “Yeah, I’m fine.”

“So I was asked to take a shift tomorrow, which you know blows, but money is money. I figured we could meet up afterward, go to the clubhouse.”

“Oh um, I think Bill mentioned having to help his dad tomorrow. And Bev is going summer shopping with her aunt.”

“So? We’ll hang out on our own. Have some radical Eddie and Richie time.”

The teen bobbed his head, clenching his teeth to keep himself from smiling too wide as he agreed. Across the way, their older counterparts came up from the water, laughing like the idiots they were.

“I should have drowned you have I had the chance,” Eddie mentioned, rubbing his eyes with the heel of his hand.

“Bullshit. You love me.” Richie argued, swirling his head around. “Fuck. I think I lost my glasses.”

“What? How?”

“Oh, Gee, I don’t know. Some dickhead threw me into the water.”

“Fuck. All right, hang on.” Eddie went under, squinting as he searched the bottom of the lake, though he found no sign of them.

The younger two swam over, going to lean casually against the rock. "Everything all right?"

"Yeah. Morgs here just knocked my glasses off my face." Richie said. "Happens more often than not."

"I'd offer to help, but I'm pretty fucking blind right now." The counterpart admitted.

"I'll go." Without another word, younger Eddie sunk beneath the water surface.

"Huh. Normally he'd bitch about having his eyes open underwater."

Eddie reappeared, shaking his head with distress. "Sorry, Teddy. I can't find them. Did you bring backups?"

There was a sudden burst from the water then, caught Richie off guard from his response. Younger Eddie gasp aloud, holding his hand up, revealing the sunken specs.

"You, little man, are my hero," Richie said, taking the glasses from him and placing them back onto his face so he could see. Younger Eddie's face was scarlet from his own, regular blush, smiling shyly after having been called a hero. Young Richie reached out, pinching his cheek playfully. "Cute, cute, cute!"

“Stop!” Younger Eddie laughed, pushing his hand away.

“What are you guys up to now?” Adult Eddie asked, pushing himself up onto the rock. The two Richie’s followed, sitting back on the rock casually.

“Don’t know. I picked up a morning shift so I can’t stay out too late.” Younger Richie mentioned.

Younger Eddie smiled brightly, going to pull himself up onto the rock to sit between the two Richie’s. “It’s summer, so my curfew is ten-thirty now.”

Richie whistled, tipping his head back to look to him. “Mrs. K is getting pretty lenient, huh? You can get pretty wild past nine PM.”

“Totally!” The youngest of the four bragged, causing his older counterpart to roll his eyes.

“Mrs. K lets Eddie stay out later so she can I can have a bit more alone time,” The longer haired teen bragged, yelping as his friend shoved him back onto the water.

“I’m going to drown you!” He threatened, jumping back into the water with him.

Richie smirked, watching as the two wrestled around just as he and

Eddie had done just before. He leaned back against the rock, letting the sun soak up in his skin, slowly beginning to dry him.

He thought back to when they were kids and they used to always find a place on the rock to layout and dry out. When no one was watching, he used to steal glances at Eddie, check him out in his pale, beautiful glory. He used to think about touching him; holding his hand and or link a pinky.

He never dared to do so, always fearing what could happen. Worrying about crossing that line. So instead he kept his distance and stayed hidden away, allowing his heart to slowly begin to drift away.

He peeked over to Eddie now, who was relaxing back against the rock peacefully. He reached out curiously, unsure if he was making the right move or not. Tentatively, he touched Eddie's hand, just his pinky.

He felt Eddie stiffen, but he didn't pull away nor did he shove at Richie to get him to stop. They laid there in the sun, pinkies laced, without a care in the world. The way it should be. It was like a little piece of heaven on earth, just there in their rock.

Except they did care. They were there for a reason and while Richie knew it was dangerous to be wasting daylight, he couldn't help but be a bit selfish and take the chance to make up for the lost time. He was human after all. A human very much in love. And he was gonna enjoy as much as he could get, even if it were just a few minutes.

So they stayed there together, pinkies laced, listening to the endless

chatter of their childhood friends as they enjoyed the stolen moment. It was as if they were back to being kids, even though they knew it wasn't the case as they could also hear their younger versions chatter and laugh in the distance with the others.

After what felt like an eternity, they heard someone come to them and sit on the edge of the rock quietly; as if trying not to disturb them.

Eddie was the first to open his eyes and slowly sit up, not letting go of Richie's pinky just yet. He found little Richie, hugging his knees as he stared at his friends. "I wish I could do that..." he murmured.

Richie sat up upon hearing his old voice, frowning at the boy's words. "Well, you can go and play kiddo. They aren't going to kick you out."

"No. Not that. This," he said, looking back to point at their hands. "It's- it's hard, you know? This fucking town is shit and everyone judges you. And if you do something that you shouldn't be doing you can bet your thirty-year-old ass Bowers will be there to beat you up." He sighed and stared back at his friends, but finally setting his eyes on Eddie.

"There is something I wanna tell him but...I don't know. There is so much to risk if I do."

Richie glanced at Eddie and smiled sadly. "Look, Rich. I'm not gonna straight up lie and tell you that being gay in the nineties is peachy. Cause it's not. But for what I've seen, that little man is worth it. He might even stand up to Bowers if you let him." He chuckled, earning

a shoulder bump from Eddie.

“He’s right. It’s not easy. But to be honest, what’s important in life never is,” Eddie added.

“Look at it that way, call me a fatalist if you want, I know I am. But what if you lose the chance? Next thing you remember you’re thirty, wallowing in your misery with a bottle of whiskey when you get a wedding invitation of him with a person who doesn’t even appreciate him. And you stare at it and, besides thinking that the card is fucking hideous, you think that it should be you. Your name should be next to his.”

It was then he felt it; Eddie lacing their fingers together for a proper hold. Richie offered a weak smile, looking back to his younger counterpart. “If you play your cards right, you’re gonna get the boy, the car and if you’re lucky, an SNL special. But it all comes with risks. You just have to be brave enough to take them.”

Both adults were surprised by how heartfelt and honest his words were. Richie was never serious, ever, but he needed to be. He had to make sure he seized the opportunity the universe gave him.

Little Richie sighed but nodded, turning to face them. “Are all adults this lame?” He tried to joke to mask his real feelings, like always. “If I get kicked out of this horrible place for being honest with myself, I’m gonna show up at your door, just so you know, old man.”

Richie grinned and laughed. “Okay, Trashmouth, we got a deal. I’ll even let you drive my car if I’m mistaken. Now go and play with your

friends, you're gonna get old if you hang out with us too much."

"I feel like I'm starting to wrinkle and my joints hurt. You're stealing my youth," he joked and jumped back into the water.

"That was sweet, Rich," Eddie mentioned to him, holding his hand still.

"Yeah well, let's just hope he takes the advice." He grumbled, scooting down to the edge of the rock. "Come on. Let's go before I get wrinkly."

"You're already wrinkly," Eddie teased, following him back into the murky water.

They stayed a little while longer, just enough to dry themselves so they could put their clothes back on. The Losers Club disbanded, each going their separate way, aside from Eddie and Richie who stayed behind to ride together.

Younger Eddie looked over his bike, groaning when he saw he got a flat tire. There was a nail or random piece of metal lodged inside of it, deflating the wheel almost entirely.

"I have a spare at my place," Younger Richie offered lightly. "We could walk together."

"If I'm late home, my mom will kill me." Younger Eddie mentioned, shifting nervously where he stood.

"How about this," Eddie, the actual Eddie, suggested. "I'll take the car and drop him off. You two walk back to Richie's house and fix that bike up. I'll swing back to pick you up later."

"You think I'm gonna let you drive my car?" Richie asked, watching as Eddie swiped the keys from his hand.

"I know you're gonna let me drive it." He replied easily like it was simple at that. A mere fact.

And it was. Richie took Eddie's bike, watching as the two got into his expensive car and drove off. Wasn't like Eddie would do anything to it. If anybody would be protective of his vehicle, it would be Eddie. So with one last look as they left the other two in the dust, they got to walk.

"So. You and Richie, huh?" Eddie mentioned on the drive back to his childhood home. "You're friends?"

"I mean, yeah."

"Nothing more?"

His young counterpart paused for a moment. "I mean, we're best

friends.”

Eddie took pride in himself, always believing he was always wiser beyond his years. He blamed that on childhood trauma that forced him to grow up faster than he wanted to, but it helped him be a bit more realistic about the world. Still, sometimes he could be an idiot like every other teenage boy.

“You think you’ll ever be more than that?”

“Oh.” The teen shifted in his seat, toying with the seatbelt nervously. “I don’t think Rich like’s me like that.”

“Really? Huh. I don’t know about that.”

“You’ve been with a guy, right? I know Teddy is gay but . . . are you?”

Eddie’s hands tightened on the steering wheel. He had never actually thought about his sexuality before. There were too many titles and choices; it all gave him a headache. “I think I like people, to be honest. I um . . . in college you sort of learn to let loose and become yourself. There had been guys and girls, but eventually, I settled on someone.”

“But you’ve liked guys before. You’ve told a guy that you like him?”

"I have, yeah." Eddie swallowed, looking at him for a moment. "I was your age when I first admitted I liked boys. Didn't work out the way I wanted but I don't regret doing it."

"Were you scared?"

"Are you kidding? I was fucking terrified. In the back of my mind, I don't know, I thought he'd reject me. I mean, he did, but not really. He didn't feel the same or at least he said he didn't. Anyway, we remained friends."

The teen shifted again, looking between Morgan and the window. "But it was worth it, right? Telling him how you felt?"

Eddie bobbed his head. For so long he kept his true feelings forced down out of spite, but even if he wasn't bitter or even angry, but would never regret making the choice he did. "It was, yeah. But who knows. May work out better for you than it did for me."

Eddie parked the car outside his house. He hadn't seen it since his mother passed away and while it did bring out a sense of nostalgia, the yelling that came from the open door left a shiver down his spine.

"I better go." The teen mentioned. "Thanks for the ride. And everything else."

Eddie watched his younger self get out of the car and hurried over to

his mother, who was demanding why he was getting in a car with a stranger. The teen tried to explain, but his words were muffled by his mother shoving him into the house. Eddie blinked, finding himself ultimately thankful that his mom was no longer around as he pulled away from the curb.

“You’re sure you don’t want any help with it?” Richie asked as they wheeled the two bikes into the garbage.

“Nah. My dad likes working with his hands. He’ll get a kick out of helping me.” The teen mentioned, kicking the stands down so both bikes could stay up properly. He teetered on the balls of his feet, adjusting his glasses nervously. “So um, do you want to come in and say hi to mom? She’s not home yet, but she should be back soon.”

Seeing his mother wasn’t ideal, or seeing either of his parents. They didn’t have the best relationship and to be honest, he blamed that on himself. He was a bitter teen who couldn’t express what was going on inside his head and he pushed people away too easily. Seeing his teen self choose to change a tire with his father brought out a rare sense of hope in Richie.

“Nah. I better head back. Don’t wanna keep Morgan waiting, you know?”

The teen bobbed his head, shoving his hands into his pockets. “All right. So um, I’ll see you around?”

“Not if I see you first,” Richie mentioned, saluting the teen before heading back down the street.

He walked two full blocks before the familiar car pulled up beside him. "Oh sorry. I'm not for sale." He called out as Eddie pushed the window down. "Then again, for a cutie like you, I may reconsider."

"Get in the car, jackass. I'm starving."

"Anybody ever told you that you're sexy when you're bossy?" Richie teased, hopping into the passenger sidecar.

There was no way they were eating at the dinner again, so they chose to get fast food, eating it in the car as they parked near the standpipe like they would when they were teens and finally had cars of their own.

It had been a little awkward back then, as their relationship wasn't what it used to be. From ages sixteen to well, just before this, they had walked on eggshells around one another, rarely hanging out on their own because their shattered hearts and egos couldn't stand to be near one another.

"I think that's my main regret," Richie mentioned between bites of his fries. "Letting out friendship sizzle out."

"That was more me than you, Rich. I was just so" Eddie didn't know the words, or maybe he did. Maybe he knew exactly how he felt, but he didn't want to admit to it, because he wasn't to be better than the stereotypes. Didn't want to play on the heartbroken bitch that forever hated the person who made him feel unloved and

unwanted.

“Still going to marry Myra when this is all over?” Richie asked somberly.

“I don’t know what the future holds anymore, Richie. We’ve already changed so much.” For all they knew, they could have shifted everything just by the small interactions they created. If Doc Brown was real he would be having an aneurysm by now.

“Will certainly be interesting to find out,” Richie mumbled, crumbling the paper of his burger. “What if we can’t leave this time?” He added suddenly. “What if we’re stuck here even after fixing everything? What do we do then?”

Richie didn’t understand the point of all of this if it wasn’t to fix the mistakes they made as children. If it was to just send them back in time, what would they do if they were stuck there forever?

“I don’t know, Rich.” Eddie sighed. “I don’t know.”

A car pulled up next to them and the driver gestured for Eddie to lower the window. Both men stared with large eyes as Henry Bowers smiled over to them. “Sick ride, man.”

Automatically Eddie reached for Richie, the childhood fear swiftly coming over him all over again.

“Yeah, and you wanna know how I got it?” Richie called out. “By working hard and being a decent human being. You should try it!”

“I hate you sometimes,” Eddie whispered, keeping a faux smile on so Henry didn’t suspect anything.

“You ever drag race that thing?” Henry questioned.

“Oh fuck yeah, dude!”

“Head to the square at eleven tonight. Let’s see how much horsepower that baby has.”

“You got it, kid. We’ll be there.”

Eddie rolled the window up, waving politely before backing up and driving off. “Please tell me you’re not going to drag race against our high school bully.”

“Are you kidding? The moment we get closer to cell service, I’m calling the cops. Tip Officer Bowers off to what his boy does after dark.”

“You’re evil, Rich,” Eddie mentioned with a devilish smile, driving them back to the townhouse.

Notes for the Chapter:

We certainly hope you're enjoying this! Please tell us down below what you think. We live for validation and we're not ashamed to admit it!

5. I Don't Want To Let You Go - Weezer

When the day finally came, both Eddie and Richie were anxious. They didn't have any changed memories or feelings. Neither knew what could happen between the two. It was obvious Eddie still wanted to speak his mind and admit his feelings, so now the ball was in Richie's court. He could either deny him like he did before or take the leap of faith and admit to wanting Eddie back.

They had the entire morning and early afternoon to sulk about it. Both pacing back and forth as they waited around the town square for any sight of the two. They grabbed food but barely ate as they were both just too worried that all of this could go up in flames.

"I swear to God, if he fucks this up, I'll kill him," Richie mentioned, staring down the Paul Bunyan statue that this horrific town decided to build.

"I don't think you can do that. If you killed yourself here, then you right now wouldn't exist."

"If I kill the younger version of myself, is that homicide or suicide?" Richie asked curiously.

Eddie turned his head, just staring at the other man in shock. "Is there a pill for what's wrong with you?"

Richie shrugged, finally looking away from the statue that used to taunt him in his wildest nightmares. He jolted up when he saw the

young version of Eddie made his way down the street, heading into the record store.

“Shit. Fuck. Do we follow?” Richie asked Eddie.

“I don’t want to distract them,” Eddie admitted. “Shit, okay. I think . . . I remember you saying your dad dropped you off with both our bikes so we could ride together.”

“How do you remember such a little detail?”

“It was a big day, dickhead,” Eddie retorted.

Moments later, their younger counterparts came out from the alleyway behind the record store, bikes at the ready, before taking off down the street. The two men froze for a moment before running off back to Richie’s car so they could follow.

Eddie remembers the entire day and what they did. After leaving the record store, they grabbed lunch one of the burger joints in town. Richie paid because he just worked a long shift and wanted to brag about his paycheck. It felt so much like a date even back then. After that, they just rode around on their bikes, being annoying little shits before heading off to the clubhouse.

They crept outside, trying their best to stay quiet like watching them through the open hatch of the clubhouse.

“This is so creepy. I feel like a stalker.” Eddie whispered as he watched their younger selves.

“If we start fooling around, is that considered voyeurism?” Richie asked, biting down a groan when Eddie smacked him upside the head.

Inside the clubhouse, their younger counterparts were chatting, reading comics, and just hanging out all together. “So I heard Ben finally stopped pussyfooting around and asked Bev out,” Richie said from where he was hanging in the hammock.

“Really? What did she say?”

“She agreed, though he thinks it may be as friends. They’re going to the festival together.”

“Well, that’s three of them.” Young Eddie mentioned. “Bill said he’s going to take Georgie. I’m surprised he didn’t ask Bev himself.”

“Maybe Bill finally got the hint that Ben is better boyfriend material than he is.”

“What do you know about boyfriend material?”

Young Richie gasped, placing his hand over his heart as if he had been wounded. "Excuse me! I know all about boyfriend material."

"Sure you do."

"Know what this shirt is made of?"

"Don't say it!"

" Boyfriend material. "

The other teen walked over, smacking his shoulder with a rolled-up comic book. "All right, dumbass. Up. My turn for the hammock."

"Just share with me."

"Are you kidding? That thing is a fucking hazard with just one person, you seriously want to add another?" He tugged on the boy's arm, groaning. "Come on, just get up!"

"How the hell did we not noticed how badly we had it for each other?" Richie whispered from where he was kneeling on the ground.

"We were dumb teenage boys, Rich. What do you expect?" Eddie

muttered. "Okay so, I climb in...."

"There you go!"

"And then we wrestle around for a bit...."

"Stop moving, you deflated ball sack!"

"And then...."

"Three . . . two . . . one!"

The teens twisted over, falling directly out of the hammock onto the ground with a loud huff. Richie was on his back with Eddie right on top of him. Richie's glasses were askew and there was dirt all around them. They lifted their heads, groaning as their eyes locked. Stupidly bashful smiles came over their faces and their adult counterparts hold their breaths and wait.

"Richie..." His voice was just like the comedian remembered. So soft, so fearful. Richie, the adult one and maybe even the teen, held his breath as he waited for him to continue. "I have to tell you something."

"I have to tell you something too."

“That’s new!” Richie hissed quietly, squeezing Eddie’s shoulder. “Holy shit, I think I’m gonna do it.”

The younger Eddie sat up, moving off Richie so he could sit beside him. Young Richie followed and they sat together for a long, quiet moment.

“I have been thinking about it a lot lately and the past few days just sort of intensified it for me.”

“Whatever it is, you can say it.”

The young teen licked his lips, taking a slow breath before beginning to speak again. “You know how Ben is hopelessly in love with Beverly? And Bev likes both Ben and Bill? I like someone too. I never thought I’d feel this way for them.”

He was blushing, talking carefully. He seemed so blissful and happy. Both Richie’s hearts soared as they waited for him to say what they needed him to say.

“It’s a guy, Rich. I don’t . . . I don’t know if I am gay or whatever but I just . . . I have had these feelings for the longest time.”

“I have them too.” The other teen swallowed hard. “Wanting to be with someone. One guy. I understand how you feel, Eddie.”

“Richie....” The younger boy laughed, his teeth shining behind his lips. “I’ve been dying to say this all day.”

“Say it. Speak your truth, Eds.”

“Rich. I like Teddy.”

“I like you too,” Richie said just as the confession left Eddie’s lips. He paused, taken aback by the words, his head cocking slightly. “Wait, what?”

“What did you say?”

“I said, I like you. You like my fucking cousin?!”

“How could I not?” The younger man asked him. “He’s so carefree and open. He was dancing to that stupid song you like at the diner and just didn’t give a fuck who was watching. I’ve never seen someone like that before.”

“I’m carefree!”

“You’re not carefree, Rich, you just do stupid shit.”

“Same thing!”

The young teen stood, wiping his hands down his body to clean off the dirt. "Look, yeah you and I have been friends forever and I thought that maybe I did have feelings for you, but I just realized that we would just never work out. I need to be with someone who is fun and doesn't shy away because he's scared of what other people would think."

"You have to be kidding right now."

"Please tell me he's kidding," Richie whispered from above, squeezing his eyes behind his glasses. "This can't be happening. I have to be in hell or purgatory or something. Maybe in an alcohol coma."

"I can't be this stupid. You're twice my age, why the hell would I like you?"

"Well, now we know which out of us would have the daddy kink," said Richie which earned him another smack on the back of his head.

"I'm not kidding! Teddy is mature and hot and proud of who he is. And that's who I like. If you can't accept that, that's your problem."

"Eddie!"

The younger teen turned back to the opening, prompting the adults to run out of sight, rushing through the woods before either of them were spotted. They tripped and tumbled over logs and other wooden shit before finally getting back to the dirt lot they left the car in.

“This can’t be happening.” Eddie hissed out, slapping his hands for his pockets. “Fuck, I don’t have my inhaler anymore.”

“How did we manage to fuck it up worse than before?!” Richie hissed out.

“I don’t know! Fuck, I don’t know!”

“This is your fault!”

“ *My* fault!”

“You just keep falling in love with me! How fucking dumb can you be!”

“It’s not my fault I can’t tell the difference!”

“Teddy?” Both men turned to see the teens making their way out of the woods. The youngest smiled eagerly, all while Richie’s counterpart sent a glare to his way. “What are you guys doing here?”

“We’re um . . . just hanging out. But we’re leaving now!”

“You don’t have to leave.”

“Yes, he does!” The young Richie snapped, making his way over to his bike. “Go back to where he came from and never come back.”

“Hey bud, maybe we could talk?” Richie offered, but the other didn’t do a thing. The teen just flipped him off, riding off back into town, leaving Eddie and the others behind.

“Yeah, I guess I deserve that. Ed- Morgan, we’re leaving. We need a few things to discuss,” he said sharply as he got into the car, ignoring the look little Eddie was giving him.

“Sorry, kid. I think you should go talk to Richie, he seemed upset,” Eddie suggested as he got into the car moments before Richie raced away from there.

“Well, I guess the tables turned this time. You broke my fucking heart.” He shouldn’t feel hurt but he was, he was hurt for his younger self.

“You’re blaming me?!” Eddie yelled. “He likes you! Jesus Christ, this is a fucking nightmare.” He groaned, rubbing his temple.

“No, no! He doesn’t like the me he should like! Instead, he likes thirty

years old me, the one who could get arrested and beaten for looking at him the wrong way.”

“How is this my fault! I can’t control him!”

“He’s you!” Richie argued.

“And I can’t control what he does or how he feels! Maybe this isn’t even the past! What if this is some fucked alternate universe?”

“Well, what kind of Fix-It AU is this?!”

“I don’t know! But I’m getting tired of it!” Eddie yelled after parking in front of the townhouse.

Richie didn’t get out right away. He twisted his hands along the steering wheel until his knuckles turned white. “Maybe... maybe we were sent here to fix everything else. And maybe we’re not destined to be together and you’re destined to forget you ever loved me and be with someone else.”

“You know what?! I’m sick and tired of the ‘Oh poor Richie act!’” Eddie retorted, sick and tired of everything. “You broke my heart when we were teens and never did anything about it. Never apologized or told me how you felt. You just pouted off in the corner and watched as I went on with my life.”

“What did you want me to do, Eddie? I was fucking scared!”

“So was I and I still loved you!” Eddie snapped at him, raising his voice in a near shout. “And part of me still does. But I don’t think I can anymore. I don’t think...”

Richie didn’t get to say anything else before Eddie got off the car and ran into the townhouse. He was a total jackass and Eddie was right. He hated Eddie for being right.

After waiting a bit, and making sure he wouldn’t run into Eddie in the halls, he got off his car and headed inside, falling face-first on the mattress. Shit, he should’ve bought a bottle of whiskey to keep himself company.

One hour passed. And Richie still felt miserable.

Two hours passed. And he couldn’t bring himself to get up. Or cry. Or even scream.

Three hours.

Four hours.

Five hours.

The clock on the bedside table read two am. Fuck it. He had to see Eddie and try to fix it. He couldn't bear to lose him completely and he was even willing to drop the Myra jokes if that made Eddie happy.

Richie got up from his bed and walked up to Eddie's room, knocking at the door. No answer. He couldn't expect less off Edward Kaspbrak.

He knocked again, harder. Still nothing. And by that point, Richie knew he was being ignored because Eddie was a light sleeper, he always complained of Richie's snores.

So he knocked harder, which made his knuckles hurt. "I'm gonna stay here until you open up, Eds. I know you're awake." When he only received silence again, he sat on the floor, back against the door, and without caring about the other residents of the place, he started singing -pretty off-key. "I don't want to close my eeeeyyyeees! I don't wanna fall asleep 'cause I miss you, Eddie! And I don't wanna miss a thiiiiiiing!"

Several yells of 'shut up' and 'go to sleep' were made from the other occupants but Richie went on singing. Going from any song he could think of, even the good old fashioned Eddie, My Love, a song that Richie used to listen to on repeat back when they were kids.

Until finally, when he almost reached the end of the song, Eddie opened the door. "Get in before someone murders you, dipshit," he said, clearly irritated as he made his way back inside.

Richie scrambled to his feet and got inside, closing the door behind

him. Over those five hours, he had thought about what he was gonna say. Was he going to apologize? Was he going to tell him he was right? Was he going to beg him not to kick him out of his life? Every single possibility. But now that he had Eddie in front of him, he just remained silent.

Both men were standing in the middle of the room, facing each other, both still fully clothed which made clear that none slept a damn minute after their fight.

“Look, Richie, what-“ Eddie started but he never finished, cause Richie took a few steps towards him and wrapped his arms around his waist before kissing him with all the love and passion and frustration that he was containing.

Fuck it , Richie told to himself. He was either getting yelled or getting some. But the yell never came, instead, Eddie placed his hands on the back of Richie’s neck and kissed back. And oh what a heavenly feeling that was.

All their feelings were being poured into that kiss. The past decade disappearing around them and making them feel as if they hadn’t wasted any second. Which they had but at least they had this last chance even if they had to go back to their time and pretend all this never happened.

And Richie was okay with that, at least he told Eddie how he felt and he tried to fix the past to try and get a better future with the man he loved.

“I let you do,” Richie muttered upon pulling away. “And it was the worst decision of my life, Eddie. But I’m not doing it a second time around. We’re in this together now, no matter one.”

Eddie pulled him back in, moaning against his lips, wanting to get a fool to the guy he never got to be with when he was young and in love.

After a little bit, Eddie pulled back from the kiss, earning a whine from Richie, who searched after his lips again.

“Rich, we shouldn’t- our first time shouldn’t be like this. It shouldn’t be rushed and angry just cause we fought. It has to be the right way,” Eddie explained, playing with the hair on Richie’s nape.

“Okay okay. But how the fuck is the right way?”

“I don’t know. But I don’t want to do it now. Can we just try and sleep? I’m exhausted but I just couldn’t bring myself to close my eyes.”

Richie nodded and kissed his cheek, just because he could, and led him to the bed. “I can stay here, right?”

“I don’t know, can you?” Eddie teased him as he got under the covers.

“And I’m the dipshit,” Richie murmured as he kicked his shoes off and joined Eddie.

Both laid on their sides, facing each other and staring into the other’s eyes. “Did you mean it?” Richie asked softly; almost scared by the answer.

“Which part? The part that I told you I still loved you?” Eddie said without looking away. “Yes, I meant it.”

Richie nodded and didn’t say anything else, just scooted closer and, just like before, wrapped his arms around Eddie. “We should rest. Who the hell knows what tomorrow will bring.”

“If we base ourselves in our lives? Utter chaos.”

That earned a chuckle from Richie, who had already closed his eyes and was about to fall asleep.

“Your glasses, Rich.” Was all he heard before drifting off to sleep, with Eddie in his arms. Honestly, he could die that night and he would welcome death with a grin.

Notes for the Chapter:

We hope you enjoy this! We also hope you like the songs each chapter is named after.

We have something new coming up, which is very exciting!

Until then please tell us what you think down below! We crave validation and aren't ashamed to say it!

6. Time After Time - Cyndi Lauper

Waking up in the same bed as Eddie was a gift that Richie had almost forgotten about. Back when they were kids, they used to squeeze into the same twin-sized bed during sleepovers. Eddie refused to sleep on the floor at Richie's house, swearing that his carpet was too gross to even stand on without socks, and Richie was just a bitch who wanted to cuddle with his cute best friend.

They were cuddling now, wrapped up together in the scratchy hotel sheets. Eddie had mentioned that he brought his own, though he never got the chance to swap them out with the sudden time jump.

Richie nuzzled against him, smiling as Eddie groaned, pressing his palm against his face to shove him away. "God, stop it. You're going to give me beard burn,"

"You love it," Richie grumbled, pulling Eddie closer to him. He didn't put up a fight and instead chose to move closer to him. It was another stolen moment that both men were happy to take, pausing only when their stomachs growled. "Okay. Breakfast."

"And shaving," Eddie told him, finally breaking away from Richie's hold.

"God. One night together and I'm already whipped." Richie muttered, following him up.

They showered separately, something Richie was a tad disappointed

on, though he didn't put up much of a fight. If Eddie wanted to take it slow, then Richie would be a mother fucking sloth. After showering, he shaved because Eddie asked him to and Richie found himself willing to do anything Eddie asked of him.

Once they were both dressed, they decided to grab something to eat before going to find their younger selves. They didn't have much of an idea of what they were going to do; Eddie made it very clear that they weren't allowed to smack any sense into the moron that was teenage Eddie.

There was an odd banging coming from outside and as they exited the townhouse they found Richie -- the gangly teenager with the recently broken heart -- taking a bat to the Camaro. They ran out, watching as he smashed in another headlight.

"Wow, wow! Hey! What the fuck do you think you're doing!?" Richie -adult Richie- hissed out.

"Richie, stop!" Eddie shouted, approaching cautiously.

"What does it look like I'm doing!" Young Richie hissed out, slamming the bat down on the hood. "You fucking ruined my life, you piece of shit!"

"*I ruined your life!?*"

"You told me to admit my feelings and he fucking ends up liking you!"

Who the fuck would like you?!”

“Listen, I think we should just talk this over.” Eddie began, biting his tongue when he was interrupted.

“It’s a little too late for that!” Richie screamed.

“Fuck you and fuck your fucking car!” His teenage counterpart screamed.

Richie laughed, bitter and diabolical as he looked over the wreck that was his prized possession. “My car? It’s *your* car too, you little moron!”

“Richie!” Eddie hissed, watching as both sets of eyes settled on him. “Stop!”

“What point does it make? We already fucked up the timeline enough!” Adult Richie, clearly pissed, yelled back at him.

“Crazy old bastard!” The teenager rushed forward, kneeing Richie sharply between the legs, causing the older male to hunch forward with a groan. He took off, hopping onto his bike and skidding away from the scene as the two older gentlemen looked on.

“I think he broke my dick,” Richie muttered with a groan. “Oh my god, I broke my dick, how the fuck is this happening?”

“Your dick is fine. You may need some ice, but you’ll be okay.” Eddie said, coming to his side. “I should go talk to him. Try to explain it without revealing who we are.”

Richie bobbed his head, hissing slightly. “Help me inside first,” He requested, taking hold of Eddie’s hand so he could stand up.

Eddie led him back into the townhouse, up to Richie’s room so he could be comfortable with his belongings. He went down and got ice from the machine, using a shower cap to fill it up. He watched as Richie placed the shower cap over his crotch, laying back on the bed.

“How did I manage to get beaten up so much when I had knees of steel?” He wondered aloud.

“Because the rest of you is as brittle as a twig,” Eddie commented gently. “Do you have any idea where you would have gone?”

“Home. Only place I ever allowed myself to cry. Always knew no one would be home to hear me.”

Eddie bobbed his head, taking Richie’s keys from his pockets. He swooped down, kissing Richie’s forehead before leaving him to rest so he could find the teenager and talk some sense into him.

Luckily for Eddie he only had to search for a short while as he found Richie kneeling by the kissing bridge, carving something into the wood. Parking across the lot, Eddie walked over to him carefully, as if he was approaching a scared animal.

“Rich?” He spoke gently, not wanting to catch him off guard.

The teen turned then, hiding whatever it was he was doing behind his back. “I’m not going to apologize.” He told him off the bat.

“Not asking you to, kid.” He swore gently. “The car is pretty ridiculous. Too flashy and the color is god awful. I think you improved on it.”

He had expected a smile or a laugh but he got nothing. Behind those large glasses, Richie could see the boy’s eyes were red and puffy. He could have spent the whole night crying for all he knew.

When he got no reply, he stepped closer, jutting his chin out towards the bridge. Swallowing hard, Richie stepped aside, revealing what he had been carving.

“Is this your handwork?” Eddie asked curiously.

“I did it when I was twelve.” He confessed to him somberly. “It rains a lot. Sometimes I’ll come over here and go over it with my keychain but it fell off my bike. So now I use my house key.”

Recurved in the faded wood of the bridge were three symbols, two letters, and one huge meaning.

R + E

Eddie remembered seeing it the day before he left Derry. It was before he headed out for college and swore to never return. He didn't think much of it other than seeing it as a lost opportunity. He wanted nothing more than to believe it was meant for him and Richie but after the pain, they both went through at the clubhouse, he wasn't dumb enough to wish such things.

Oh, how little did he know...

"I just don't get it," Richie muttered, his voice strained as he spoke. "Why am I like this? I feel like there is something wrong with me."

"Hey hey! No. Richie, there is nothing wrong with you." Eddie swore gently, placing his hand on the teen's shoulder.

"There is all this talk around the school. Gay guys getting AIDS and dying like Freddie Mercury."

"You're not gonna die, Rich," Eddie swore. "I know these feelings are confusing and scary but I promise that there is nothing wrong with them or you."

“I thought I could be brave and say how I feel but it didn’t even matter anymore.”

“It does! Of course, it matters. Look, Eddie he...right now he thinks he wants that other guy and you know why? Because he is confused. He sees that big idiot not having a care in the world and thinks that is what he wants most, but he is wrong. What he wants is you.”

“If he wanted me he could have had me! Offered myself up to him on a silver platter.” Richie sniffled, rubbing his eyes behind his glasses.

“Sometimes you don’t realize what you have until you lose it. Back when . . . when I was your age I let my anger and hatred get the best of me. I took the rejection of someone I loved very badly and it left me bruised. After that moment I never allowed myself to fully care about someone because the person I cared most about pushed me away.”

“Isn’t it better that way? Like the song? Harden your heart and swallow your tears?”

“Easier but not better,” Eddie confessed. “I never told him how I felt. The pain from the rejection. I just smiled and went along with everything because I wanted to make it easy for everyone. I didn’t want to bother anyone with my issues.”

“Stanley said you told him to speak to someone when he is feeling down. Aren’t you going to take your advice?”

“I did once I got older. As a kid — young adult — I was still dumb and naive; just like you.”

Eddie looked over Richie, watching as the teen tried to collect himself and not start crying all over again. He saw a piece of himself there; a young boy who just wants to be loved by someone. By the one person who had always looked out for him and made him feel like he wasn't broken.

“It's going to be okay, Richie.”

“And if it's not? How are you supposed to live with a broken heart?” Richie asked him, and Eddie never thought he would hear him so broke and vulnerable.

“It's not easy but it's doable.”

Richie bobbed his head, sniffing once more. Eddie could feel the boy practically vibrating on the sidewalk so he pulled him in, allowing him to cry into his hoodie. He held onto him tightly, just as he wished someone had held onto him when he faced his heartbreak all those years ago. He ran his fingers up and down his back, letting Richie have this moment he so desperately needed.

While the young Richie was healing mentally and emotionally, the older version was healing physically. He had forgotten how bad it hurts to be hit in the nards and never realized just how strong he was as a gangly teenager.

He didn't know what would happen if Eddie found his teen counterpart but he only hoped he didn't go after him with the bat. Eddie was fast but he wasn't some spry chicken.

A knock on the door caught Richie's attention. The ice bag was melted and the pain in his groin had gone away. He pushed up on the bed, figuring it was either Eddie without a key or the cleaning lady.

When he opened the door, he found Eddie there, just not the one he had been hoping for. Fifteen-year-old Eddie Kaspbrak stood in front of him, wearing his favorite white shirt with the pressed collar and red shorts.

Those shorts had haunted Richie's dreams for weeks on end and when the boy ended up joining the track team, he was left with more material for his spank-bank than humanly possible.

Of course, that was when they are both the same age. Older Richie didn't have the same reaction to seeing Eddie in that ridiculous outfit.

"Oh. Hey. What's up, buddy?"

"Hi. Richie mentioned you were staying here." The teen mentioned. "Can I come in?"

“Oh, I don’t think-” Richie stepped aside as Eddie made his way in. He pinched the bridge of his nose tightly. “He’s not here. He left like twenty minutes ago.”

“Who?”

“The one with the glasses and the very powerful bat.”

“Oh. Well, I’m not here to see him. I’m here to see you.”

Richie frowned and tilted his head slightly to the side, confusion clear in his face. “Me? Why do you want to see me?” He had to play dumb and pray that Eddie had come here to tell him “Thank you for the advice, I’m telling Richie I love him.”

“I- I know our age gap, I went over the math and... thought about everything but- I really....” little Eddie was bright red, almost as red as his shorts, and Richie knew that it was bad news.

“Look, kid, I know what you told Richie. My car and groin suffered for it. But-” he sighed and shook his head. “You’re not thinking straight. First of all, you’re underage.”

“But I’ll be legal in November,” Eddie interrupted him, taking a step forward and biting his lip.

“And I’ll be arrested before October,” Richie argued.

“I know I’m not experienced or anything. But- but I’m ready to do that sort of stuff and you can always teach me. Everyone says I’m a quick learner,” he teenager insisted, reaching to place his hand on Richie’s chest and looking up at him through his eyelashes.

“Oh no no,” Richie shook his head and stepped back, keeping some distance between them. “Eddie, stop before you say or do something you’re gonna regret. Or worse, do or say anything that will get me thrown in jail or have my ass handed to me by Bowers' dad. I’ve managed to avoid police encounters for the past twenty years and I plan on keeping it that way.”

“But-”

Richie cut him off, pinching the bridge of his nose. “You don’t like me and you’re probably going to hate me for what I’m about to say, but I need to be honest to knock some sense into that thick skull of yours. Fuck, I can’t believe I have to be the reasonable adult here,” he murmured, looking at Eddie to his eyes. “You like Richie, you love him. And don’t lie, adults can see through lies. It’s a weird fucking superpower we have. Do you know why you think you’re into me? Because I’m just him but all grown up. Same glasses and shitty jokes, just with the lack of care and a bit more maturity.”

He could see the panic and doubt go through Eddie’s expression at that point. “But he acts so dumb, and can’t take anything seriously, and he’s always too afraid of what people might think to do anything,” Eddie said softly, not looking up at the other anymore.

“I haven’t changed much.” Richie laughed and murmured.

“What?” The boy asked, glancing back at the man in front of him.

“Nothing. Just that I’m the same. I tell dick jokes for a living, tease the hell out of everybody, and I’m afraid to come out to the public due to growing up in this fucking homophobic town.” He walked over to where Eddie was standing and placed his hand on the boy’s shoulder. “This carefree version of me? It’s all a facade. I’m terrified all the time, mostly around Morgan. And Richie’s like that as well, kiddo. But he did tell you he liked you, and I know him more than you think and he was terrified as fuck, but he still did it. And that’s pretty fucking brave if you ask me.”

Eddie looked up then and opened and closed his mouth several times as if he was trying to find words. “You said where you were was okay with gays. And you seem to have your life together. I mean, you got a job, a nice car.”

Richie has to laugh at that. Oh how he wished to go back to that age, that naïve age. “I barely hold it together, Eddie. I’m a walking disaster. Yeah, I told *you two* I was gay cause one, I know you won’t tell, two, Richie’s family and three, I could see the way you were looking at Richie. It’s the same look I got when I see Morgan.”

And here he was. Fifteen years later and breaking Eddie’s heart again. But this time he had to do it; he had to make little Eddie forget about adult Richie and go look for the one he was supposed to like.

“I’m flattered, kid. And believe me, if I was fifteen years younger, I’d be all over you, but this-” He gestured between them. “Aint gonna happen.” And he was being honest there, his younger self was trying

to date Eddie after all. “And I know for a fact that deep down you love Richie. Now, do yourself a favor and think about all that. But most importantly, let go of those feelings you have for me because they’re useless,” he said as he gently pushed Eddie towards the door.

“B-but, I want to stay. I’m sure about-“

“Nah Nah Nah! I don’t take no for an answer and you have to respect your elders.” He opened the door and pushed Eddie to the hallway. “Go and think about all the shit I just told you. You can thank me later. And remember, you can ask Richie out for tomorrow’s festival. If I’m wrong about everything, I’ll buy you a new bike. Goodbye, Edward.” And with that, he closed the door, without letting the boy even answer him. Oh boy, this was going to be a hell of a story to tell Eddie.

It was a few hours later when Eddie finally returned. He grabbed food for him and Richie to eat, having missed out on breakfast, lunch, and even brunch. After the conversation by the Kissing Bridge, he drove Richie home, letting the teen rant the entire ride back.

He released all the emotions he had built up over the years, finally letting it all come out. It was obvious he didn’t have anyone he trusted enough to say this to and he found particular solace in this apparent stranger.

“You know, your friends are pretty amazing. I think if you talked about this with them, they’d listen.”

“They shouldn’t have to listen to my gay rambling,” Richie mumbled,

adjusting his glasses.

“You can ramble about more things than just being gay. You can talk to them about anything.”

“I guess.”

“I’m sure Stan would like to talk to you about some stuff. I know he’s pretty quiet, but they say those who say the least need to talk to the most.”

“He’s my best friend, you know. After Eddie, of course though I don’t think Eddie and I are friends anymore.”

“I think that’s something you have to discuss with him, bud,” Eddie said sadly.

Richie bobbed his head, pausing for a moment as they pulled up to his house. He undid his seat belt, sighing quietly to himself. “Sorry I beat up Teddy’s car.”

“It’s fine. I get it, you know. It’s pretty ridiculous.”

“Thank you. You know. For listening and shit.”

“Any time kid.”

He ran off after that, cutting across his lawn and disappearing into his house. Eddie returned to the townhouse then, stopping only to grab food as his stomach was starting to churn from hunger.

They sat together on Richie's bed, eating and discussing what went down when they were away. Eddie was impressed by his younger self's determination while Richie confessed that he never actually thought he'd open up to someone the way his counterpart had.

“Not exactly how I expected this do-over to go,” Richie confessed dishearted.

“No, but I did realize something,” Eddie told him, turning to face him properly on the bed. “I was angry with you after what happened. I played it off like it was nothing, but it wasn't. I just couldn't understand how you didn't want me the way I wanted you.”

“I did, Eds. I wanted you so much it hurt. I was just scared.”

“And I get that now,” Reaching out, he took Richie's hand on his own; his thumb running along his knuckles slowly. “I never considered your fear. I just figured if I could be bold, so could you, but looking back and seeing him -- you -- on that bridge. I saw the carving you did.”

Richie's cheeks darkened then and he sat up straight against the

headboard. “I almost forgot about that.”

“I forgive you, Richie. For letting me go and being too scared to be who you wanted to be.”

“That’s sweet, Eds, honestly. Though I don’t know if my teenage self will ever forgive the teenage you for wanting to sleep with some old guy.”

“You never know. We’re wiser than we look.”

Richie reached out, toying with the hem of Eddie’s shirt, smiling as he thought back to the hellscape that he went through with the teen earlier today. “I gotta say though. If I had known how freaky you were as a teen, I might have come out earlier.”

“What?”

“Oh yeah. Came onto me. Said you wanted me to *teach* you some stuff.”

“Oh my god,” Eddie hide his face in his hands, groaning aloud.

“It’s only fair. You teach me how to properly brush my teeth, and I teach you how to use your mouth for other things.”

“That’s sick. That’s disgusting and sick.”

“Kissing! Geez, what a dirty mind you have, Edward. You haven’t changed a bit in fifteen years, have you?”

Eddie kissed him then. Sudden and deep, just like the night before, though unlike then, Eddie didn’t pull away this time. They kissed until their lungs begged for air and even then, Richie continued to keep his mouth on the other man, kissing down his jaw until he found a place on his neck to nibble and suck on.

The noise, or most likely the whine, Eddie made went straight to Richie’s dick and fuck, he hadn’t gotten this hard this quickly in years.

“Richie,” Eddie mumbled softly, his fingers combing through Richie’s waves. “Richie.”

“Sorry,” he groaned, pulling away from him, only to be stopped by Eddie.

“I didn’t tell you to stop.”

“I’m only human, Eds. You gotta throw me a bone here. Tell me how far you wanna take it.”

“And if I say all the way?”

Richie pauses, blinking behind his glasses. “You’re...are you sure? We can wait. We can wait as long as you need.”

“I’m sure, Rich. It’s all out in the open, you know? No more waiting.”

Richie bobbed his head dumbly. “Right. Okay. No more waiting.” He wasn’t going to lie, he was nervous as hell. One thing was to fuck a guy and forget about him the next day, but being with Eddie was different, he didn’t want either of them to forget about that night, whether it was their last time or the first of many many more.

“Do you happen to have what we need?” Eddie asked almost shyly, clearly nervous as well.

The other nodded and pecked his lips softly before getting up to rummage through his suitcase. He didn’t know why, cause he wasn’t planning on doing anything, but he had brought condoms and lube anyway. Ha! Past Richie was patting himself on the back. *Well done, buddy. I’ll reward you with a beer later.*

Richie came back mere seconds later and made sure to lock the door before joining Eddie, who hadn’t moved an inch since he left, back on the bed. “You sure about this?” He asked as he sat down, and he wasn’t greeted with a verbal response but with Eddie climbing on his lap and kissing him again. Okay, yeah, way better than a verbal response.

Eddie pulled back from the kiss only to take his and Richie's shirt off, gently running his hands all over the other's chest, making him shiver.

"Fuck, Eds. You are eager to do this," he murmured, almost out of breath.

"Yeah, well... I waited fifteen fucking years, dipshit. Of course, I am impatient."

That earned a chuckle from Richie, who was now busy undoing Eddie's jeans. "Touche. I hope I don't disappoint." He peppered a few kisses all over Eddie's neck and up his jaw to whisper to his ear. "I'm gonna need you to lay down on the back, yeah?"

The other shivered and nodded, swallowing hard as he did what he was told. Richie stared at him for a few moments, just admiring the beauty of the man in front of him. "Fuck, I am a lucky bastard after all," he murmured without even intending to.

"Yeah, you are, Rich. But you can tell me all that later," he said with a pout. "I'm getting impatient and the jeans are getting uncomfortable."

"Shit, sorry baby, just got distracted. Can you blame me though?" He asked with a smirk as he knelt next to the other's legs and tugged at his jeans. He bit his lips and ran his hands up Eddie's thighs, relishing every single shiver and little moan that escaped from the other's lips. "You're so beautiful it's almost unfair," he said as he rubbed him slowly and teasingly over his boxers.

“S-shit, Richie. You’ll be the death of me,” he moaned, arching his back just slightly. It has been a while since he had any fun with something that wasn’t his hand, and to top it all off, it was Richie who was doing it. Eddie felt in heaven, but heaven was being slow. “Please hurry or I’m gonna die.”

Richie didn’t know where to begin. No, his mind was everywhere. Should he suck Eddie off? Should he just get on with it and prep him? He didn’t know but he had to look confident enough or Eddie would see through his bullshit. He slowly tugged off his underwear and bit his lip. “Most beautiful dick I’ve seen, honestly. Sonia’s best creation for sure.”

“Fuck, Richie, can you not bring my mother into this? I’ll kick you out of the-“

Richie didn’t let him finish, he wrapped his hand around the other’s dick and stroked him slowly, just to give Eddie something else to think about. “What were you saying, Eds?” He teased him as he reached the bottle of lube; he already knew what he was going to do, and oh boy he was going to enjoy it. Hopefully, Eddie was going to enjoy it too.”

“You’re- *fuck*... you’re an ass, Trashmouth.”

“Oh, baby, if I were you, I wouldn’t insult my mouth so prematurely.” He let go of Eddie’s dick and tapped his hip. “Lift baby.” And once Eddie did, he placed a pillow under his hips, jousting him up a little. Then he opened the lube and coated three fingers. “Just tell me if it gets too much, yeah?” He said softly as he

leaned down over Eddie and took the tip into his mouth.

Okay, it has been long since he sucked a dick, but there are some things you never forget, just like riding a bicycle. Riding in general (but he was going to save that for later.) And he took pride in his abilities, he was told he had a golden mouth in bed and a trash mouth on stage. He was proud. And now, that he had Eddie moaning his name over and over as he took more of his cock in his mouth? He deserved a Nobel Prize for sucking dick or something.

Just after a little bit, Richie carefully started circling Eddie's entrance slowly, so the other could get used to the feeling. Eddie did squirm a little, and he understood, Richie was also nervous the first time, even though the guy he had been with didn't bother into being so gentle. He pulled back from sucking him off to look up at him carefully. "You okay there, Eds?"

The man in question had his eyes closed and was gripping the sheets tightly, his knuckles almost white. "Y-yeah. Rich. Peachy," he hoarse out.

"Just checking, sweetcheeks." He gave his hips a little peck and slowly and as gentle as he could, but really, how can you do this gently?- he slid his finger inside him, earning a little yelp from the man which made Richie stop immediately.

"Please- please don't stop, I'm fine," he murmured, reaching to run his fingers through Richie's hair. "Just took me by surprise."

Richie leaned against the touch and kissed Eddie's wrist before

humming in approval and resuming what he was doing. Taking his time, making sure Eddie was okay, he stretched him until he was three fingers deep inside him. And the sight was just... breathtaking. Richie could die the next day and he'd die a happy man.

He took his fingers out once he knew Eddie was ready and slowly got up to undress. The other man looked up at him, needy expression clear in his features. "Please hurry or I'm gonna cum on my own," he threatened which made Richie hurry up a little bit.

Once naked, he tore up the little packet and quickly slid the condom on; he was sure he was clean as he got tested every six months and he knew Eddie was cleaner than himself, but they could discuss the future of their sex life later. And he also didn't want to freak Eddie out just yet; not when he was like that.

He climbed back up on the bed and knelt between Eddie's legs before leaning down to capture his lips in a heated kiss; Eddie wrapping his legs immediately around Richie's waist. "You're gorgeous, Eds," he murmured. "Again, tell me if it gets too much."

Eddie caressed his jaw and kissed him again, this time more sweetly. "I trust you completely, I'm even trusting you my ass," he tried to joke to try and ease Richie's concerns. Truth was, he was a little bit, it hurt, okay? He knew it was gonna feel good in the end, but it also hurt. But he trusted the other man and he knew he was never gonna hurt him on purpose.

Richie nodded and kissed him again as he lined his dick with Eddie's entrance and pushed in. They both moaned into their lips, the sensation overwhelming them both.

“Open your eyes, baby, I wanna see you,” Richie murmured as he pulled back from the kiss.

They both started into each other’s eyes as Richie picked up his pace; none saying anything but praises and nicknames and moans, sharing little kisses from time to time.

Everything was so intense, passionate and loving, it was almost perfect. Almost, cause none of them knew what would become of them when they came back to their time. If they came back to their time. But that wasn’t something they concentrated for long, deciding to just enjoy what they had at that moment.

“Rich...” Eddie moaned after a bi, and the other knew what that meant, so he reached down and started stroking him again.

“Let go, babe, I got you,” he murmured against his lips, feeling himself get close to his orgasm as well.

Eddie came first, all over his stomach and Richie’s hands, moaning the other’s name and not caring if anyone in the other rooms could hear. And Richie followed close, chanting his lover’s name almost like a prayer.

They stayed like that, resting their foreheads together, and trying to catch their breaths for what it felt hours before Richie pulled out and laid down next to Eddie. “You okay, Eds?” He asked softly, looking at his side to the man in question.

Eddie smiled wide; well as wide as he could despite being exhausted and completely fucked out. "I'm perfect, Rich." He replied softly.

They sat there quietly, trying their best to figure out where to go from there.

"What if we're stuck in this time forever?" Richie asked him. "What if we can never go back to the future?"

"I don't know, Richie. I guess we'll find out together." Eddie mentioned, touching his hand gently.

Richie laced their fingers together, placing them on top of his chest, just above his beating heart. "Together."

7. Like A Prayer - Madonna

Notes for the Chapter:

Happy Thanksgiving to those celebrating! To those not, happy Reddie update day!

When the following morning came, neither man rushed to wake up. It would be a delicate memory for them to share; waking up once again wrapped in each other's arms. They cleaned up carefully that night, leaving Richie's room to sleep in Eddie's, so they wouldn't have to worry about the wetly stained sheets.

Sleep came easily for them and when they woke in the late morning, they took their time dressing. There was no more messing around or taking anything for granted. No more walking on eggshells. Richie could touch, Eddie could look. They shared shy smiles and held one another as the time ticked on. It wasn't ideal but they made it worth their while.

When the idea of what would come next came along, they realized they could do was take it one step at a time. If they were going to be stuck in that place then they'd make the most of it.

"New York or California. We'll find a city, make it our home, and deal with what comes our way." Richie told him as they snuggled together in bed.

"Think of all we could accomplish with the knowledge we have of the next fifteen years."

“I’m totally investing in Microsoft. And Apple! Dude, we’re gonna be rich.”

Eddie smiles, squeezing against Richie’s side. “We’ll have to wait for the right to do anything for a good while.”

“It’ll be worth the wait,” Richie swore, kissing the top of Eddie’s head gently.

They would do it together. No worries or regrets. They would do their awaiting and grow old together. Marry when they could and have a child when the opportunity would come along. They would get a dog and name it *Hot Space* or maybe something normal. They didn’t know but they were eager to find out.

They decided to enjoy this day for what it was. Tomorrow they’d leave Derry and never have to worry about a thing.

Well, of course, they’d worry. Being stuck in the early ’90s is not ideal for two gay men or whatever Eddie chooses to label himself but that didn’t matter at that moment. They would be together and with that, they could manage anything.

His car was still durable so Richie just cleaned up the bruises to the best of his ability. To his surprise he found his bank account to still be intact though he quickly found that he wouldn’t be having any more money added to the account.

Eddie's account had plenty of payment to it despite Myra beginning to drain it for all the wedding procedures. Sure, her parents paid for the actual venue but everything else was on Eddie's dime.

"Guess we'll have to find new ways of making money," Eddie mentioned with a shrug, going through his wallet to count the cash he had on him.

"We'll make it work," Richie said, kissing Eddie's head gently before getting dressed.

They mostly hung around town, trying to piece together where to go from there. New York seemed ideal for right now until Eddie pointed out that it was California that got legalized first for gay marriage.

"Summer sun it is," Richie agreed.

It would take them some time to get there and Eddie was very sure that they wouldn't be able to do it with a beat-up car but they'd make it work. Until then they'd take it one step at a time.

"What do you say? Should we hit up the Summer Sensation one last time before blowing this pop stand?"

"Oh yeah. Get some greasy food. Play shitty games."

"Ride lame rides. I could win you a beaver," Richie suggested

playfully.

“My absolute hero,” Eddie decided with a sigh.

They ended up going because it was something to do. One final goodbye to this lame town. They did eat greasy food and go on rides. Richie didn't win him a beaver however Eddie did knock over the bottles and win Richie a stuffed turtle that was too cute for words and Richie swore to cherish it forever as they continued to walk around the place.

As nightfall came and the tent went up, everybody huddled underneath to enjoy the live music they had playing. They stayed there for a bit, mostly just people watching as they drank the shitty beer they had on tap, sitting off in the car corner where no one would notice them.

The first ones they noticed were Ben and Beverly, who were seen holding hands, a giant stuffed bear in Beverly's arms; a prize that Ben had won for her. After that, Bill arrived with Georgie and Mike, grabbing a table across the way so they could eat and fool around.

There was no sign of the other three and they were beginning to think it was for the best until Eddie caught sight of Richie's teen counterpart across the way, chatting up a storm with Stanley. Both were dressed nicely; not surprising for Stan but it seemed this Richie took the time to comb his hair and put on something other than a Hawaiian shirt.

“I'm sort of impressed. Where was this when we were young?”

“Right there, dumbass,” Richie muttered, gasping when his gaze came across Eddie’s young counterpart. “Oh fuck.”

“Do you think I’ll say anything?” Eddie asked, just as his teen self decided to make his way over.

“Welp. Time to break your heart twice.” Richie said, downing his bottle.

Before he got the chance to say anything, however, his own younger self cut the little Eddie off, blocking the way so he could speak to him.

“Fuck what am I doing?” Richie asked trying to read the teenager’s lips.

“Rambling. Honestly nothing new.”

“Is it good rambling? What the hell is happening? I can’t hear anything.”

Richie’s counterpart continued to go on and on until he finally stopped, silencing himself by kissing the other Eddie. He kissed him hard, right there in front of anybody bothering to pay them any mind. He held that delicate face in those big hands as if he would crumble any other way.

“Certainly not bad rambling,” Eddie muttered softly.

The adults watched as the teens pulled away, a dopey smile coming across the younger Eddie’s lips before he finally made a move to pull Richie back in, kissing him there without a single fuck to give.

“Well, that was unexpected.”

“Rich, we should...” Eddie made a motion for them to leave. It seemed rather silly to just stay in the corner and watch, so they left their table, pausing when they were stopped by Stanley.

“Hi,” the teen said softly, shyly.

“Hey, bud. What’s going on?”

“Richie told me that you helped him come to his senses,” Stanley mentioned carefully. “I just wanted to let you know that my mother agreed to allow me to see a therapist.”

“She did?” Richie asked with a grin.

“That’s great, Stan,” Eddie added.

“We’re going to start slow. But, talking about what is going on is the first step to changing it,” Stan explained.

“That’s right, man. You made a good decision.”

“I better go catch up to the others,” Stan mentioned after a moment, offering a small smile and wave before slipping into the crowd.

“Holy shit.”

“Maybe we did change something for the better,” Eddie suggested, jumping as he turned and his teenage self was standing right beside him.

“Hi.”

“Oh. Hey guys.”

“Eddie told me I have to apologize to you. You know, for the whole trashing your car with a baseball bat thing.” The younger Richie explained. “Sorry about that.”

“Totally understandable, dude. I would have done the same thing.” The actual Richie told him.

Their younger selves were standing there, smiling happily and holding hands so carelessly. “I also wanted to apologize. I came on a bit hard yesterday. I think I was just angry and confused. You’re nice but looking over it I think you’re just too old for me,” little Eddie said with a shrug.

“Eddie was worried if you two were physical you may break a hip or have a heart attack,” the other teenager teased.

“My hips are perfectly fine, thanks. You can ask him if you don’t believe me.” Richie commented, groaning when Eddie elbowed him in the ribs. “So... this is a thing now?” He asked, gesturing to the two of them.

“Oh yeah. Definitely a thing.”

“Definitely more than a thing.”

“That’s great guys,” Eddie proclaimed. “We’re proud of you.”

“Are you sticking around much longer?” Richie, the teen one, asked the adult one.

“Nah. We’re gonna hit the road. See what the future holds, you know?”

“By the way, I told my mom you were in town and she thought you

were still in the army. She said she just got your postcard for Guam.”

“And we’re leaving. Come along, Morgan!” Richie grabbed hold of Eddie’s hand, tugging him out of the tent.

“See you around, fellas.” Eddie waved.

“Microsoft and Mac! Invest, Richard! You’ll thank me one day!” Richie shouted as he and Eddie left the fairgrounds.

The teenager looked confused, shaking his head gently. “He is so weird,” The younger Richie muttered, reaching out to take his boyfriend’s hand and lead him back to their friends.

The two adults went back to the car and they drove through Kissing Bridge to get back to the townhouse. The lights flickered around them but that was nothing new in Derry. Once back, Richie set Teddy the Turtle on the nightstand and crawled into Eddie’s bed, holding him close as they fell asleep.

And for the first time in days, he was excited to wake up and see what the future held for them.

Notes for the Chapter:

Almost at the end! Please tell us what you thought.
Kudos to those leaving Kudos but it's the written words that get us going!

8. These Are The Days Of Our Lives - Queen

Eddie woke up first but not because of his marvelous natural clock, no. He was woken up by an insistent knock at the door. It was loud and harsh, demanding their attention.

“Tell them to fuck off,” Richie half murmured half snored. He hated being woken up and he hated now when it meant that he had to get up and stop cuddling Eddie.

“Let's go! Come on, Eddie, you're usually awake by now!” Bill's voice came from the other side of the door. Big Bill. William. “Up before I send Mike to drag you out.”

His voice hit them both as if someone threw a bucket of ice water to them.

“That was-“ Richie started as he reached for his glasses in the nightstand and put them on.

Eddie jumped up out of the bed, rushing off to answer the door. Bill -- the adult version -- was already halfway down the hallway. “Hey! Good, you're awake. Come on! Everybody is downstairs waiting.”

Eddie was left flabbergasted, stumbling back into the bedroom. “That was the adult Bill. Oh my god, we're back,” Eddie said, starting to panic. “He said I needed to get ready. Oh no, didn't we change a fucking thing?”

He paused, going back to the door, finding Bill heading downstairs. "Bill! What time is it? Is it too late? Where's Myra?" He asked quickly in his old fashioned way.

Bill frowned at him and reached for Eddie's arm, trying to make eye contact with him. "Eddie, you okay? Who the hell is Myra?"

Eddie's mind and nervous speech stopped in that instant. "You don't know who Myra is?"

The other shook his head. "Should I?"

At that moment, Richie stood behind Eddie, rubbing his eyes behind his glasses. "Everything okay?"

Bill glanced at him and sighed, rolling his eyes. "Look, I don't know how late you stayed awake and I don't want to know, but you two better get ready or we'll be late for the restaurant." He patted Eddie's shoulder and walked away.

"He doesn't know who Myra is," Eddie muttered, utterly dumbfounded.

"He doesn't? How does he not know your bride to be? Scratch that. Get dressed and we'll find out." Richie suggested.

“God, could you two hurry up already?” A very pregnant Beverly commented, coming up the stairs just to tell at the two.

“Oh my *God* ! Bev, look at you!” Eddie exclaimed, rushing over to her and followed by Richie.

“You’re fucking huge!” Richie proclaimed, his hands automatically going to her stomach.”

“You can say that again,” Eddie chuckled.

“Excuse me? You told me yesterday I was glowing. Are you calling me fat now, Tozier?” Bev hissed, slapping arm with the palm of her hand.

“Tozier?”

“Yeah. Tozier. Jesus, how much did you drink last night to forget your name? Now go get dressed or we will miss our reservation.” She walked away then, heading for the stairs as she left two very confused men behind.

“She called me Tozier,” Eddie murmured.

Richie groaned then, pinching the bridge of his nose as a wave of memories came flowing back into him. “We got married. We got fucking married on the 24th of June. Fuck we’re cheesy,” he

groaned.

“What the fuck a- oh fuck! We’re married!” Eddie exclaimed, raising his hand to stare at his platinum ring. “Rich, these cost a fortune. Are we rich or something?”

“I have two Netflix specials and I got two Emmys for my own HBO show,” he murmured, staring at his ring. “Holy shit, we’re open! We’re gay. Oh this is gonna keep getting better and better, isn’t it, Eds Spaghetti?” He grinned as he ran back into the room to get dressed quickly. All of his things were there, of course, they were, they were a married couple after all.

Eddie followed him and got dressed as well. “I think we followed your advice and we did invest in Apple. Did we listen to you?” he commented as he checked the tags on their clothes; everything must have cost a fortune. “What the fuck did we do, Trashmouth?”

“I don’t know but I’m fucking loving it so far!” Richie exclaimed as he finished getting ready. He checked himself out in the mirror, seeing his reflection for the first time. His hair was cut and his face was clean. He looked like he gave a shit about his appearance for the first time in forever. “Holy shit, look at me. Look at you!”

He gestured who Eddie, who wasn’t wearing a polo or anything that made him look like a child in adult clothing.

“Come on. Hurry up!”

Another knock came then, and the door opened to reveal Ben standing there.

“Well damn, Haystack! Look at you.” Richie whistled.

Ben had gotten healthier over time, but rather than the ripped man who was still so pathetically in his own life, he looked happy and healthy, just like the rest of them.

“Oh great, you’re almost done,” Ben said with a smile. “I went to check that and also my wife told me to remind you, Eddie, that she’s beautiful no matter what you say. She added some cursing but really, I don’t want to repeat that.”

“She’s gorgeous. Beverly is gorgeous and pregnant with your baby.”

“It certainly better be mine. We certainly tried hard enough to create the little miracle.” Ben laughed softly. “Now come on. Get downstairs before I call Patty and have her drag you to the restaurant herself.”

“Who’s Patty?” Richie asked after the door closed.

Eddie paused, hissing at a pinch of pain that came into his mind. There were missing spots, things he had yet to remember, but he was hopeful they would come back. Grabbing their shoes and keys, they hurried downstairs, following Bill, Ben, and Beverly out to the parking lot.

There was a line of cars waiting for them. Some were excessively flashy, but none seemed to belong to them. Instead towards the end of the block, there was a different car. Not trendy, but still fashionable, and comfortable enough for more than just two people.

“Still Think I’m sexy in a minivan, Eds?”

“It’s not a minivan, dipshit. Just get inside. We’re going to miss our party.”

A party, that was why they were back in this horrible town. A group reunion for everyone. They had all left Derry like they swore they would, finding their success, but every year they would meet up. New York, California, Florida, and even Maine if they needed to.

They drove to the Chinese restaurant, a place they were meeting up for lunch before the rest of the day's events took place. They sat in the parking lot for a moment, both stalling for as long as they could.

Hanging from the car’s rear window was Richie’s Street Fighter keychain. He touched it gently between his fingers, smiling to himself. He looked over to Eddie -- his husband, the love of his life. His best friend. The father of....

“Morgan.”

Eddie cocked his head, the name echoing through his head. "Morgan!"

They scrambled from the car, running into the restaurant. They dodged passed the other patrons and hurried off into the private room set up. Instead was a woman, kneeling between two children.

The first was younger. A small boy in a button-down and pressed pants, and the second was a girl around the age of five. She was in a sparkly dress and was laughing happily.

Richie's heart soared the moment his eyes laid on her. "Morgan!" He called out.

The little girl turned her head, her smile widening when she caught sight of them. "Daddy! Papa!"

She broke away from the circle, running over and leaping into Richie's arms to hug him tightly. Richie hugged back, careful not to crush her. And he will deny it till the end of time, he wasn't crying. No, don't lie Eddie. "Oh, my baby girl. I love you so much," he murmured, kissing her forehead. "Always remember that I and daddy love you too much."

Eddie wrapped his arms around Richie and kissed his daughter's cheek. "We love you."

And that was the thing, he didn't tell Eddie why he called him

Morgan, at least not during these last few days in the past. He did it in the course of the last updated fifteen years. Several nights, drunk and high, he would dream of what would life be if he was with Eddie. Living together, happily married. And in all fantasies, they got a kid, a girl, a boy. It didn't matter, even though deep down he knew he wanted a girl. And Morgan was the name he always thought about while dreaming about his made-up family. Richie, Eddie, and Morgan. It was perfect but unreal. Well, unreal until now apparently.

The little girl giggled and nodded. "I love you too! Can I go back and play with Teddy?" She asked as she struggled to get off Richie's hold.

He set her down and watched her run to the other boy. "Teddy?" He asked his husband. Wow, he was loving that new term for Eddie.

"Hey, losers. About time you two decided to show up. Leaving your daughter with your friends to have a little intimacy is considered cheating," came a voice behind them. A voice that was familiar but at the same time strange. They turned around and there, by the door of the private booth, stood a very much smiling and a very much alive Stanley Uris. "What? It's like you've seen a ghost."

Neither Rich nor Eddie remembers who ran first, but they did, rushing to their friend to hug him tightly. And yes, tears were shed. They made it. They fixed every single thing. Even the most important one, saving Stan's life.

"Dude, you saw me yesterday," Stan chuckled, hugging them.

"We know, but we're thanking you for babysitting Morgan for the

night, Stan the man,” Richie lied smoothly. “Thank you for coming.”

...thank you for living.

“You’re lucky she’s a cute kid. Something she didn’t get from either of you.” Stan mentioned with a smile.

“All right! Let the annual Losers Club commence!” Mike said, walking up with a dog under his arms.

“You can’t bring that here,” Stan mentioned, only to be shoved aside by Richie.

“The fuck he can. Hello sweetheart!” Richie took the dog -- Penny, her name was Penny because she didn’t cost a thing when they rescued her -- into his arms, letting her lick around his face happily.

“Oh, that’s unsanitary,” Stan mumbled, going back to the children.

“Eds. We have a dog. We have a child, and a dog, and so much money.” Richie said eagerly.

Eddie sighed happily and looked at the scenery around them. “We got everything, Rich. You motherfucker, we did it!” He laughed and pulled him down for a kiss.

“Oh come on! Didn’t you have enough last night?” Stanley teased from his seat next to his wife, the other losers agreeing with him.

Richie flipped him off and kissed Eddie again. “There’s only one thing that I couldn’t do and I regret it so much,” he murmured against his lips.

“Oh no, baby, what is it?” his husband asked worriedly.

“I didn’t get to fuck your mom one last time.”

Eddie lifted his hand, slapping Richie upside the head for old time's sake before turning back to join the others. Richie just laughed, following along as he accepted the new chance they had been given.

Notes for the Chapter:

Thank you so much for putting up with this wild ride! We hoped you sincerely enjoyed it! If you liked what we wrote here, make sure to check out our latest adventure: Lights Up!

Author's Note:

Extra shout out to Nani, who not only co-wrote this but also created the mood board. Hurrah for multitalented people!